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SHORT READINGS
FROM
ENGLISH POETRY



H. A. HERTZ

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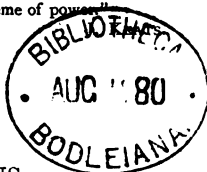
ENGLISH POETRY

CHOSEN AND ARRANGED, WITH OCCASIONAL
NOTES

For the Use of Schools and Classes

BY
HELEN A. HERTZ

"A drainless shower
Of light is poesy; 'tis the supreme of power."



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PREFACE

THE purpose of this book will, perhaps, be best explained by my first stating what it is not. It is not a manual of English poetical literature. It is not a collection of poetical gems. Nor are the contained poems and extracts chosen as being characteristic of their respective authors. Classification in their arrangement has been avoided. They are grouped irrespective of chronological sequence, or any other method of division, such as would naturally be preferred in a representative collection. The present order was adopted simply with the view of obtaining a fairly harmonious linking of parts, and also something of a *crescendo* throughout. This latter object could not, however, be more than partially effected, as the attempt was made only after all the pieces had been brought together.

The first condition of the collection was that it should be suitable, and sufficiently varied, for practice in the pleasant, and much-neglected, art of reading aloud; the second, that nothing should be included that was not worth reading. How far they have been fulfilled, it remains for others to decide.

At first sight, the book will probably appear open to criticism, both on the score of its omissions and of its admissions. With regard to the omissions, I think that

they are justified by my first starting-point—fitness for the purpose of reading aloud. On this account, certain poets have been either entirely excluded or scantily represented. Chaucer was a difficulty, by reason of the many notes needed to explain him;¹ Spenser, because it is scarcely possible to detach short passages of his great work from their context, without injuring their force and beauty. Many of Milton's minor poems are overcharged with mythological allusions; Dryden is seldom suitable for class-reading; Burns, next to impossible for English readers. Thus, my choice has not, in any instance, been guided either by the rank of a poet, or the extent of his works.

Then, as to the admissions. Many may appear to assume a too high average of intelligence and culture in the reader. I can only say that nearly every piece has been submitted for acceptance or rejection to a preparatory class of students of the Queen Square College for men and women. This was not a picked class, by any means. Those of my students who may chance to read this preface will endorse my accuracy when I say that, though the name of Shakespeare was known to all, his works (with scarcely an exception) were unknown; that Chaucer was unheard of; Milton, no less, though the *name* of *Paradise Lost* was tolerably familiar; that Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Keats, and our living poets, did not exist for them even as names. Yet this same class has been able to enter, with genuine pleasure, into the greatest of what our greatest poets have given us. It is not to be supposed that this appreciation cost no effort. That would be equal to saying that the feeling for beauty is

¹ As all poetry requiring many explanatory notes has been avoided, so also, for the same reason, the necessary notes have been made as short as possible, in order that the reading may not be hindered either by their absence or presence.

independent of culture. On the contrary, there was a considerable amount of work to be done, much discussion and explanation to be gone through, before my London students could be brought to share the excitement of the Roman citizens, while Mark Antony was addressing them, standing over the dead body of Cæsar. And Wordsworth and Cowper often require one to take a long flight out of the smoke and noise of the city.

Even though the labour of such study result but in a vague and imperfect understanding, the time thus employed need not be held lost. *Æsthetic* culture seems to require an opposite process of transmission from the purely intellectual. Mental training, as we are being told every day, must proceed step by step, moving only with each successive move of the conquering mind. Not so *æsthetic* training. It must always begin by being a too ample garment into which the wearer has to grow. Children should read poetry, and the best, long before they can fully understand it, that their ear may become sensitive to the finest perfection of form. The gradual breaking in of the light of intelligence, the definite meaning completing the first vague sense of pleasure, then become a high and intense enjoyment.

Much help must come from the teacher if this little volume is to be turned to useful account. I think, also, that the teacher will gain assistance from the time devoted to such study; for it seems to me that the practice of reading poetry aloud may, by conscious effort, afford a more delicate test of the growth of intelligence than any one other separately employed. And I do not know what exercise can better develope that intelligence. A chief aim of all wise educational efforts, theoretical and practical, must be, I think, to remove the human being ever further from the condition of a machine; to produce that fine mobility of sense which, by a rapid perception

and assimilation of changing circumstances, enables its possessor to think and act in harmony with surrounding nature. The forms of intelligent initiative which we most value—imagination, sympathy, tact, sense of humour—are the outcome of this quality. All life should foster it. Many studies may; but poetry, by the immensely rapid and varied action which it arouses in the mind, unites in itself much of their more fragmentary working. It touches innumerable points in the area of thought; stirs up depths which a less perfect instrument might for ever leave unsounded. In fact it educates. And, while other kinds of teaching must be constantly recast into form, by more or less competent teachers, before being turned to account, poetry has, in common with music, the advantage of a definite, unchangingly beautiful expression, and lies open to all.

It may seem superfluous thus to make an appeal for that which is already so generally recognized. But mere recognition, as one sees now and then in the case of human beings, may yet leave many claims unsatisfied. It is not enough that elegantly-bound volumes of poetry should figure in every household, nor even that an occasional play of Shakespeare, or book of *Paradise Lost*, be laboriously “got up” to satisfy a Cambridge examiner. If poetry is to profit us, we must know it intimately, and that means wide and frequent reading. Let the gallery of poets be regarded more as many thoughtful people are willing to regard other art-collections and concerts.

Here are both pictures and music :

“And she I cherished turned her wheel
Beside an English fire.”

“Though the virgins of Salem lament,
Be the judge and the hero unbent !
I have won the great battle for thee,
And my father and country are free !

"When this blood of thy giving hath gushed,
When the voice that thou lovest is hushed,
Let my memory still be thy pride,
And forget not I smiled as I died!"

"Thou wilt remember one warm morn when winter
Crept aged from the earth, and spring's first breath
Blew soft from the moist hills; the black-thorn boughs
So dark in the bare wood, when glistening
In the sunshine, were white with coming buds,
Like the bright side of a sorrow, and the banks
Had violets opening from sleep like eyes."

I think that anyone who begins to enquire must be astonished at the very slight acquaintance with poetry of people in general, even those who are considered to be cultured. And yet just now it might serve as a strong force. We live to-day amidst a multitude of half-shattered beliefs, whose falling fragments threaten at times to hide the deep foundation of human feeling upon which the old structures arose. Fortunately for us the spiritual bond draws its strength from many sources, and of these, no less fortunately, some, by their very nature, lie safely beyond reach of destructive reasonings. To them it therefore seems natural to turn as one means of preserving, without antagonism to the spirit of scientific enquiry, that massive body of emotions, failing which most lives can neither be well spent nor happy.

A VERY FEW WORDS ABOUT READING ALOUD.

I can attempt only to point out most briefly some of the commonplaces of this subject; an ample treatment would require more than mere writing. Poetry must, as a rule, be read slowly. While the prose writer (excluding poetical and oratorical prose) may use words of all kinds and unlimited number to convey his meaning, the poet is much more restricted. Rhythmic form hinders the direct expression of the thought, which we therefore take

in with greater effort. Poetical effect depends largely upon the distinct realization of a rapid series of images ; for this, again, time is necessary. Here is an instance :

“ She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn
Or up the mountain springs ;
And her’s shall be the breathing balm,
And her’s the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things.”

It would not be easy to reckon up the many elements that contribute to form the two contrasted moods which we are made to feel in these lines. Certainly, on a first reading, we could not take them in in a hurry. Words, too, become of increasing importance in proportion to the perfection of the poetry. A single word, with all the associations that cluster round it, often forms in itself a picture, and by passing over it quickly, we may fail to strike the right note of thought in the listener. The force of words can be strengthened or weakened, and even changed, by the manner of their utterance. Sir Walter Scott, in his *Kenilworth*, makes Queen Elizabeth say to her rival earls, “Sussex, I entreat—Leicester, I command you.” “Yet,” adds the novelist, “so were her words accented that the entreaty sounded like command, and the command like entreaty.” One seldom hears reading aloud in which such disunion of thought and utterance does not occur. It is well for the Psalms of David that they are not only known by being heard in the churches ; we might never have felt their whole splendour.

An unskilful reader will contrive to take all the stretch of distance out of the line,

“ Far, far I had roamed on a desolate track,”

¹ reduce to a slow march the gathering song of Donald
lack :

"Fast they come, fast they come ;
See how they gather !
Wide waves the eagle plume
Blended with heather.
Cast your plaids, draw your blades :
Forward each man set !
Pibroch of Donuil Dhu
Knell for the onset !"

One essential of good reading is to subordinate both rhythm and rhyme to sense. They are like the accompaniment of the song, and must not interfere with its meaning. In fact they only delight the ear when indistinctly perceived. Even when the sense permits their accentuation, efforts must be made to prevent such monotony.¹ When the sense forbids it, the fault simply results in destruction of meaning. Every rule, however, has its exceptions, and so, at times, the full meaning can only be brought out by marking the rhythm. For instance, in this line of Marvell's,

"With falling oars they kept the time,"

we may slightly accentuate the measure in order to complete the idea of rowing. And a clever reader will keep one reminded of the unbroken gallop of the horses in "How they brought the good news from Ghent to Aix," in spite of the extraordinary multitude of descriptive facts, which it is so all-important to bring out. Rhyme is also, at times, an aid to effect ; but, as a rule, it should be effaced.

Perhaps, just as in writing, the great thing is to know clearly what one wants to express ; the chief necessity in reading aloud is to know clearly what one wants to render. This achieved, rules need hardly be consciously observed. Indeed their chief use is to make people feel when they are to be broken.

¹ One can hardly hear more perfect mastery of this difficulty than at the Théâtre Français, in the representations of its modern metrical and rhymed plays.

It is needless to say that special gifts of voice and delivery must give superiority to their possessors ; but thought and exercise of imagination will go a long way, and there are few people who cannot be taught to read sufficiently well to give pleasure. I think it is not necessary to spend many words upon showing the desirableness of exercise in an art, which nearly everyone requires, at some time or other, to turn to practical account.

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SHORT READINGS FROM ENGLISH POETRY

I.

The Consoling and Sustaining Power of Beauty.

A THING of beauty is a joy for ever :
Its loveliness increases ; it will never
Pass into nothingness ; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.
Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways
Made for our searching : yes, in spite of all,
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,
Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon
For simple sheep ; and such are daffodils
With the green world they live in ; and clear rills
That for themselves a cooling covert make
'Gainst the hot season ; the mid-forest brake,
Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms :
And such too is the grandeur of the dooms
We have imagined for the mighty dead ;
All lovely tales that we have heard or read :
An endless fountain of immortal drink,
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

Nor do we merely feel these essences
 For one short hour ; no, even as the trees
 That whisper round a temple become soon
 Dear as the temple's self, so does the moon,
 The passion poesy, glories infinite,
 Haunt us till they become a cheering light
 Unto our souls, and bound to us so fast,
 That, whether there be shine, or gloom o'ercast,
 They alway must be with us, or we die.

J. KEATS.

2.

The Sustaining Power of Love.

WHEN in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
 I all alone beweep my outcast state,
 And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
 And look upon myself, and curse my fate,
 Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
 Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
 Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,
 With what I most enjoy contented least ;
 Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
 Haply I think on thee ; and then my state,
 Like to the lark at break of day arising
 From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate :
 For thy sweet love remembered, such wealth brings,
 That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

W. SHAKESPEARE.

3.

Jenny.

JENNY kissed me when we met,
 Jumping from the chair she sat in ;
 Time, you thief ! who love to get
 Sweets into your list, put that in.
 Say I 'm weary, say I 'm sad ;
 Say that health and wealth have missed me ;
 Say I 'm growing old, but add—
 Jenny kissed me !

LEIGH HUNT.

4.

The Daffodils.

I WANDERED lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay
In such a jocund company.
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft when on my couch I lie,
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

W. WORDSWORTH.

5.

Rain in Summer.

How beautiful is the rain!
After the dust and heat,
In the broad and fiery street,
In the narrow lane,
How beautiful is the rain!
How it clatters along the roofs,
Like the tramp of hoofs!
How it gushes and struggles out
From the throat of the overflowing spout!

Across the window-pane
It pours and pours ;
And swift and wide
With the muddy tide,
Like a river down the gutter, roars
The rain, the welcome rain !

The sick man from his chamber looks
At the twisted brooks ;
He can feel the cool
Breath of each little pool ;
His fevered brain
Grows calm again,
And he breathes a blessing on the rain.

From the neighbouring school
Come the boys,
With more than their wonted noise
And commotion ;
And down the wet streets
Sail their mimic fleets,
Till the treacherous pool
Engulfs them in its whirling
And turbulent ocean.

In the country, on every side,
Where far and wide,
Like a leopard's tawny and spotted hide,
Stretches the plain,
To the dry grass and drier grain
How welcome is the rain !

In the furrowed land
The toilsome and patient oxen stand ;
Lifting the yoke-encumbered head,
With their dilated nostrils spread
They silently inhale
The clover-scented gale,
And the vapours that arise
From the well-watered and smoking soil.
For this rest in the furrow after toil
Their large and lustrous eyes
Seem to thank the Lord,
More than man's spoken word.

Near at hand,
From under the sheltering trees,
The farmer sees
His pastures and his fields of grain,
As they bend their tops
To the numberless beating drops
Of the incessant rain.
He counts it as no sin
That he sees therein
Only his own thrift and gain.

These, and far more than these,
The poet sees!
He can behold
Aquarius¹ old
Walking the fenceless fields of air;
And from each ample fold
Of the clouds about him rolled
Scattering everywhere
The showery rain,
As the farmer scatters his grain.

He can behold
Things manifold
That have not yet been wholly told,—
Have not been wholly sung nor said.
For his thought that never stops,
Follows the water-drops,
Down to the graves of the dead,
Down through chasms and gulfs profound
To the dreary fountain-head
Of lakes and rivers underground;
And sees them, when the rain is done,
On the bridge of colours seven
Climbing up once more to heaven,
Opposite the setting sun.

Thus the Seer
With vision clear,
Sees forms appear and disappear,
In the perpetual round of strange,
Mysterious change

¹ The water-bearer, one of the twelve signs in the zodiac, the track of the sun.

6 *Short Readings from English Poetry.*

From birth to death, from death to birth,
From earth to heaven, from heaven to earth,
Till glimpses more sublime
Of things, unseen before,
Unto his wondering eyes reveal
The Universe, as an immeasurable wheel
Turning for evermore
In the rapid and rushing river of Time.

H. W. LONGFELLOW.

6.

To a Skylark.

UP with me! up with me into the clouds!
For thy song, lark, is strong;
Up with me, up with me into the clouds!
Singing, singing,
With clouds and sky about thee ringing,
Lift me, guide me till I find
That spot which seems so to thy mind!

Alas! my journey, rugged and uneven,
Through prickly moors or dusty ways must wind;
But hearing thee, or others of thy kind,
As full of gladness and as free of heaven,
I, with any fate contented, will plod on,
And hope for higher raptures, when life's day is done.

W. WORDSWORTH.

7.

The Voice of Spring.

I COME, I come! ye have called me long,
I come o'er the mountains with light and song!
Ye may trace my step o'er the wakening earth,
By the winds which tell of the violet's birth,
By the primrose-stars in the shadowy grass,
By the green leaves, opening as I pass.

I have breathed on the south, and the chestnut flowers
By thousands have burst from the forest-bowers:
And the ancient graves, and the fallen fanes,
Are veiled with wreaths on Italian plains;—
But it is not for me, in my hour of bloom,
To speak of the ruin or the tomb!

I have looked o'er the hills of the stormy north,
And the larch has hung all his tassels forth,
The fisher is out on the sunny sea,
And the rein-deer bounds o'er the pastures free,
And the pine has a fringe of softer green,
And the moss looks bright where my foot hath been.

I have sent through the wood-paths a glowing sigh,
And called out each voice of the deep blue sky;
From the night-bird's lay through the starry time,
In the groves of the soft Hesperian¹ clime,
To the swan's wild note by the Iceland lakes,
When the dark fir-bough into verdure breaks.

From the streams and founts I have loosed the chain;
They are sweeping on to the silvery main,
They are flashing down from the mountain-brows,
They are flinging spray on the forest-boughs,
They are bursting fresh from their sparry caves,
And the earth resounds with the joy of waves.

Come forth, O ye children of gladness, come!
Where the violets lie may now be your home.
Ye of the rose-lip and dew-bright eye,
And the bounding footstep, to meet me fly!
With the lyre, and the wreath, and the joyous lay,
Come forth to the sunshine,—I may not stay,

Away from the dwellings of care-worn men,
The waters are sparkling in grove and glen!
Away from the chamber and sullen hearth,
The young leaves are dancing in breezy mirth,
Their light stems thrill to the wild-wood strains,
And youth is abroad in my green domains.

F. HEMANS.

8.

To the Cuckoo.

NOT the whole warbling grove in concert heard
When sunshine follows shower, the breast can thrill
Like the first summons, Cuckoo! of thy bill,
With its twin notes inseparably paired.
The captive, 'mid damp vaults unsunned, unaired,

¹ Hesperia was a name given to Italy by the Greeks. It is derived from Hesper or Vesper, the evening or setting sun.

8 *Short Readings from English Poetry.*

Measuring the periods of his lonely doom,
That cry can reach ; and to the sick man's room
Sends gladness, by no languid smile declared.
The lordly eagle-race through hostile search
May perish ; time may come when never more
The wilderness shall hear the lion roar ;
But, long as cock shall crow from household perch
To rouse the dawn, soft gales shall speed thy wing,
And thy erratic voice be faithful to the spring !

W. WORDSWORTH.

9.

Written in March.

THE cock is crowing,
The stream is flowing,
The small birds twitter,
The lake doth glitter,
The green field sleeps in the sun ;
The oldest and youngest
Are at work with the strongest ;
The cattle are grazing,
Their heads never raising ;
There are forty feeding like one !

Like an army defeated
The snow hath retreated,
And now doth fare ill
On the top of the bare hill ;
The plough-boy is whooping—anon—anon :
There's joy in the mountains ;
There's life in the fountains ;
Small clouds are sailing,
Blue sky prevailing ;
The rain is over and gone !

W. WORDSWORTH.

10.

To the Cuckoo.

HAIL, beauteous stranger of the grove !
Thou messenger of spring !
Now heaven repairs thy rural seat,
And woods thy welcome sing.

Soon as the daisy decks the green,
Thy certain voice we hear.
Hast thou a star to guide thy path,
Or mark the rolling year?

Delightful visitant! with thee
I hail the time of flowers,
And hear the sound of music sweet
From birds among the bowers.

The schoolboy, wandering through the wood
To pull the primrose gay,
Starts, thy most curious voice to hear,
And imitates thy lay.

What time the pea puts on the bloom,
Thou fliest thy vocal vale,
An annual guest in other lands,
Another spring to hail.

Sweet bird! thy bower is ever green,
Thy sky is ever clear;
Thou hast no sorrow in thy song,
No winter in thy year!

Oh, could I fly, I'd fly with thee!
We'd make, with joyful wing,
Our annual visit o'er the globe,
Companions of the Spring.

J. LOGAN.

II.

The Happy Heart.

ART thou poor, yet hast thou golden slumbers?
O sweet content!

Art thou rich, yet is thy mind perplexèd?
O punishment!

Dost thou laugh to see how fools are vexèd
To add to golden numbers, golden numbers?
O sweet content! O sweet, O sweet content!

Work apace, apace, apace, apace;
Honest labour bears a lovely face;
Then hey nonny nonny, hey nonny nonny!

Canst drink the waters of the crisped spring?
 O sweet content!
 Swimm'st thou in wealth, yet sink'st in thine own tears!
 O punishment!
 Then he that patiently want's burden bears
 No burden bears, but is a king, a king!
 O sweet content! O sweet, O sweet content!
 Work apace, apace, apace, apace;
 Honest labour bears a lovely face;
 Then hey nonny nonny, hey nonny nonny!

T. DEKKER.

12.

Elegy written in a Country Church-yard.

THE curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
 The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,
 The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
 And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
 And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
 Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
 And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds:

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower
 The moping owl does to the moon complain
 Of such as, wandering near her secret bower,
 Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
 Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,
 Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
 The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,
 The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,
 The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
 No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
 Or busy house-wife ply her evening care:
 No children run to lisp their sire's return,
 Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike th' inevitable hour:—
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye Proud, impute to these the fault
If Memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or Flattery soothe the dull cold ear of death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands, that the rod of empire might have swayed,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre:

But knowledge to their eyes her ample page,
Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll;
Chill penury repressed their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem, of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village Hampden,[†] that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood,
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

[†] A gentleman of Buckinghamshire in the time of the English Revolution, who sturdily refused to pay an unjust tax, levied for the purpose of increasing the king's revenue.

Th' applause of list'ning senates to command,
 The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
 To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
 And read their history in a nation's eyes,
 Their lot forbade : nor circumscribed alone
 Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined ;
 Forbad to wade through slaughter to a throne,
 And shut the gates of mercy on mankind ;
 The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
 To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
 Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
 With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.
 Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
 Their sober wishes never learned to stray ;
 Along the cool sequestered vale of life
 They kept the noiseless tenour of their way.
 Yet e'en these bones from insult to protect
 Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
 With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture decked,
 Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.
 Their name, their years, spelt by th' unlettered muse,
 The place of fame and elegy supply :
 And many a holy text around she strews,
 That teach the rustic moralist to die.
 For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,
 This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,
 Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
 Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind?
 On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
 Some pious drops the closing eye requires ;
 E'en from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
 E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires.
 For thee, who mindful of th' unhonoured dead,
 Dost in these lines their artless tale relate ;
 If chance, by lonely contemplation led,
 Some kindred spirit shall enquire thy fate,—
 Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
 "Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
 Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,
 To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

- "There, at the foot of yonder nodding beech,
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noon-tide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.
- "Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Muttering his wayward fancies he would rove ;
Now drooping, woeful-wan, like one forlorn,
Or crazed with care, or crossed in hopeless love.
- "One morn I missed him on the customèd hill,
Along the heath, and near his favourite tree ;
Another came ; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he ;
- "The next with dirges due in sad array
Slow through the church-way path we saw him borne,—
Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay
Graved on the stone beneath yon agèd thorn."

THE EPITAPH.

- Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth,
A youth to Fortune and to Fame unknown ;
Fair Science frowned not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy marked him for her own.
- Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere ;
Heaven did a recompense as largely send :
He gave to Misery all he had, a tear,
He gained from Heaven, 't was all he wished, a friend.
- No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose)
The bosom of his Father and his God.

T. GRAY.

13.

The Vicar.

- SOME years ago, ere Time and Taste
Had turned our parish topsy-turvy,
When Darnel Park was Darnel Waste,
And roads as little known as scurvy,

The man who lost his way between
Saint Mary's Hill and Sandy Thicket
Was always shown across the green,
And guided to the Parson's wicket.

Back flew the bolt, of lissom lath ;
Fair Margaret in her tidy kirtle
Led the lorn traveller up the path,
Through clean-clipt rows of box and myrtle :
And Don and Sancho, Tramp and Tray,
Upon the parlour steps collected,
Wagged all their tails, and seemed to say,
"Our master knows you ; you're expected !"

Uprose the Reverend Dr. Brown,
Uprose the Doctor's "winsome marrow ;"
The lady laid her knitting down,
Her husband clasped his ponderous Barrow ;
Whate'er the stranger's caste or creed,
Pundit or papist, saint or sinner,
He found a stable for his steed,
And welcome for himself, and dinner.

If, when he reached his journey's end,
And warmed himself in court or college,
He had not gained an honest friend,
And twenty curious scraps of knowledge ;—
If he departed as he came,
With no new light on love or liquor ;—
Good sooth, the traveller was to blame,
And not the Vicarage or the Vicar.

His talk was like a stream which runs
With rapid change from rock to roses :
It slipped from politics to puns :
It passed from Mahomet to Moses :
Beginning with the laws which keep
The planets in their radiant courses,
And ending with some precept deep,
For dressing eels or shoeing horses.

He wrote, too, in a quiet way
Small treatises and smaller verses
And sage remarks on chalk and clay,
And hints to noble lords and nurses ;

True histories of last year's ghost,
Lines to a ringlet or a turban,
And trifles for the *Morning Post*,
And nothings for Sylvanus Urban.

He did not think all mischief fair,
Although he had a knack of joking ;
He did not make himself a bear,
Although he had a taste for smoking ;
And when religious sects ran mad,
He held, in spite of all his learning,
That, if a man's belief is bad,
It will not be improved by burning.

And he was kind, and loved to sit
In the low hut or garnished cottage,
And praise the farmer's homely wit,
And share the widow's homelier pottage :
At his approach complaint grew mild,
And when his hand unbarred the shutter,
The clammy lips of fever smiled
The welcome which they could not utter.

He always had a tale for me
Of Julius Cæsar or of Venus :
From him I learned the rule of three,
Cat's cradle, leap-frog, and *quæ genus* ;
I used to singe his powdered wig,
To steal the staff he put such trust in ;
And make the puppy dance a jig
When he began to quote Augustine.

Alack the change ! in vain I look
For haunts in which my boyhood trifled ;
The level lawn, the trickling brook,
The trees I climbed, the beds I rifled :
The church is larger than before ;
You reach it by a carriage entry ;
It holds three hundred people more ;
And pews are fitted up for gentry.

Sit in the Vicar's seat, you'll hear
 The doctrine of a gentle Johnian,
 Whose hand is white, whose tone is clear,
 Whose phrase is very Ciceronian.
 Where is the old man laid?—look down
 And construe on the slab before you,
Hic jacet Gulielmus Brown,
Vir nullâ non donandus lauru.¹

W. M. PRAED.

14.

The Village Preacher.

NEAR yonder copse, where once the garden smiled,
 And still where many a garden-flower grows wild;
 There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,
 The village preacher's modest mansion rose.
 A man he was to all the country dear,
 And passing rich with forty pounds a year;
 Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
 Nor e'er had changed, nor wished to change, his place;
 Unskilful he to fawn, or seek for power
 By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour;
 Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,
 More bent to raise the wretched than to rise.
 His house was known to all the vagrant train,
 He chid their wanderings, but relieved their pain;
 The long-remembered beggar was his guest,
 Whose beard descending swept his aged breast;
 The ruined spendthrift, now no longer proud,
 Claimed his kindred there, and had his claims allowed;
 The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
 Sat by his fire, and talked the night away;
 Wept o'er his wounds, or, tales of sorrow done,
 Shouldered his crutch, and showed how fields were won.
 Pleased with his guests, the good man learned to glow,
 And quite forgot their vices in their woe;
 Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
 His pity gave ere charity began.

O. GOLDSMITH.

¹ "Here lies interrèd William Brown,
 What laurel worthy for his crown!"

15.

The Village Inn.

NEAR yonder thorn that lifts its head on high,
Where once the sign-post caught the passing eye,
Low lies that house where nut-brown draughts inspired,
Where grey-beard mirth and smiling toil retired;
Where village statesmen talked with looks profound,
And news much older than their ale went round.
Imagination fondly stoops to trace
The parlour splendours of that festive place;
The white-washed wall, the nicely-sanded floor,
The varnished clock that clicked behind the door;
The chest, contrived a double debt to pay,
A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day;
The pictures placed for ornament and use;
The twelve good rules, the royal game of goose;
The hearth, except when winter chilled the day,
With aspen-boughs, and flowers, and fennel gay;
While broken tea-cups, wisely kept for show,
Ranged o'er the chimney, glistened in a row.
Vain transitory splendours! could not all
Reprieve the tottering mansion from its fall?
Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart
An hour's importance to the poor man's heart;
Thither no more the peasant shall repair,
To sweet oblivion of his daily care;
No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale,
No more the woodman's ballad shall prevail;
No more the smith his dusky brow shall clear,
Relax his ponderous strength, and lean to hear;
The host himself no longer shall be found
Careful to see the mantling bliss go round;
Nor the coy maid, half willing to be pressed,
Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest.

O. GOLDSMITH.

16.

The Fallen Lime-tree.

OH, joy of the peasant! O stately lime!
Thou art fall'n in thy golden honey-time.
Thou whose wavy shadows,
Long and long ago,
C

Screened our grey forefathers
 From the noon-tide's glow;
 Thou, beneath whose branches,
 Touched with moonlight gleams,
 Lay our early poets,
 Wrapt in fairy dreams.

O tree of our fathers! O hallowed tree!
 A glory is gone from our home with thee!

Where shall now the weary
 Rest through summer eves?
 Or the bee find honey,
 As on thy sweet leaves?
 Where shall now the ringdove
 Build again her nest?
 She so long the inmate
 Of thy fragrant breast?

But the sons of the peasant have lost in thee
 Far more than the ringdove, far more than the bee!

These may yet find coverts
 Leafy and profound,
 Full of dewy dimness,
 Odour and soft sound;
 But the gentle memories
 Clinging all to thee,
 When shall they be gathered
 Round another tree?

O pride of our fathers! O hallowed tree!
 The crown of the hamlet is fallen in thee!

F. HEMANS.

17.

Inscription for a Fountain on a Heath.

THIS Sycamore, oft musical with bees,—
 Such tents the Patriarchs loved! O long unharmed
 May all its aged boughs o'er-canopy
 The small round basin, which this jutting stone
 Keeps pure from falling leaves! Long may the Spring,
 Quietly as a sleeping infant's breath,
 Send up cold waters to the traveller
 With soft and even pulse! Nor ever cease
 Yon tiny cone of sand its soundless dance,

Which at the bottom, like a Fairy's page,
As merry and no taller, dances still,
Nor wrinkles the smooth surface of the fount.
Here twilight is and coolness : here is moss,
A soft seat, and a deep and ample shade.
Thou mayest toil far and find no second tree.
Drink, Pilgrim, here ! Here rest ! and if thy heart
Be innocent, here too shalt thou refresh
Thy spirit, listening to some gentle sound,
Or passing gale or hum of murmuring bees !
S. T. COLERIDGE.

18

An English Scene.

I HAD a little chamber in the house,
As green as any privet-hedge a bird
Might choose to build in, though the nest itself
Could show but dead-brown sticks and straws ; the walls
Were green, the carpet was pure green, the straight
Small bed was curtained greenly, and the folds
Hung green about the window which let in
The out-door world with all its greenery.
You could not push your head out and escape
A dash of dawn-dew from the honeysuckle,
But so you were baptized into the grace
And privilege of seeing . . .

First, the lime,
(I had enough there, of the lime, be sure,—
My morning-dream was often hummed away
By the bees in it ;) past the lime, the lawn,
Which, after sweeping broadly round the house,
Went trickling through the shrubberies in a stream
Of tender turf, and wore and lost itself
Among the acacias, over which you saw
The irregular line of elms by the deep lane
Which stopped the grounds and dammed the overflow
Of arbutus and laurel. Out of sight
The lane was ; sunk so deep, no foreign tramp
Nor drover of wild ponies out of Wales
Could guess if lady's hall or tenant's lodge
Dispensed such odours,—though his stick well-crooked
Might reach the lowest trail of blossoming briar

Which dipped upon the wall. Behind the elms,
 And through their tops, you saw the folded hills
 Striped up and down with hedges, (burly oaks
 Projecting from the line to show themselves)
 Through which my cousin Romney's chimneys smoked
 As still as when a silent mouth in frost
 Breathes, showing where the woodlands hid Leigh Hall ;
 While, far above, a jut of table-land,
 A promontory without water, stretched,—
 You could not catch it if the days were thick,
 Or took it for a cloud ; but, otherwise,
 The vigorous sun would catch it up at eve
 And use it for an anvil till he had filled
 The shelves of heaven with burning thunderbolts,
 Protesting against night and darkness :—then,
 When all his setting trouble was resolved
 To a trance of passive glory, you might see
 In apparition on the golden sky
 (Alas, my Giotto's background!) the sheep run
 Along the fine clear outline, small as mice
 That run along a witch's scarlet thread.

Not a grand nature. Not my chestnut-woods
 Of Vallombrosa, cleaving by the spurs
 To the precipices. Not my headlong leaps
 Of waters, that cry out for joy or fear
 In leaping through the palpitating pines,
 Like a white soul tossed out to eternity
 With thrills of time upon it. Not indeed
 My multitudinous mountains, sitting in
 The magic circle, with the mutual touch
 Electric, panting from their full deep hearts
 Beneath the influent heavens, and waiting for
 Communion and commission. Italy
 Is one thing, England one.

E. B. BROWNING.

19.

The Shepherd.

YET, hail to you
 Moors, mountains, headlands, and ye hollow vales,
 Ye long deep channels for the Atlantic's voice,
 Powers of my native region! Ye that seize

The heart with firmer grasp ! Your snows and streams
Ungovernable, and your terrifying winds,
That howl so dismally for him who treads
Companionless your awful solitudes !
There, 'tis the shepherd's task the winter long
To wait upon the storms : of their approach
Sagacious, into sheltering coves he drives
His flock, and thither from the homestead bears
A toilsome burden up the craggy ways,
And deals it out, their regular nourishment
Strewn on the frozen snow. And when the spring
Looks out, and all the pastures dance with lambs,
And when the flock, with warmer weather, climbs
Higher and higher, him his office leads
To watch their goings, whatsoever track
The wanderers choose. For this he quits his home
At day-spring, and no sooner doth the sun
Begin to strike him with a fire-like heat,
Than he lies down upon some shining rock,
And breakfasts with his dog. When they have stolen,
As is their wont, a pittance from strict time,
For rest not needed or exchange of love,
Then from his couch he starts ; and now his feet
Crush out a livelier fragrance from the flowers
Of lowly thyme, by Nature's skill enwrought
In the wild turf : the lingering dews of morn
Smoke round him, as from hill to hill he hies,
His staff protending like a hunter's spear,
Or by its aid leaping from crag to crag,
And o'er the brawling beds of unbridged streams.
Philosophy, methinks, at Fancy's call,
Might deign to follow him through what he does
Or sees in his day's march ; himself he feels,
In those vast regions where his service lies,
A freeman, wedded to his life of hope
And hazard, and hard labour interchanged
With that majestic indolence so dear
To native man. A rambling schoolboy, thus
I felt his presence in his own domain,
As of a lord and master, or a power,
Or genius, under Nature, under God,
Presiding ; and severest solitude
Had more commanding looks when he was there.

When up the lonely brooks on rainy days
 Angling I went, or trod the trackless hills
 By mists bewildered, suddenly mine eyes
 Have glanced upon him distant a few steps,
 In size a giant, stalking through thick fog,
 His sheep like Greenland bears; or, as he stepped
 Beyond the boundary line of some hill-shadow,
 His form hath flashed upon me, glorified
 By the deep radiance of the setting sun :
 Or him have I descried in distant sky,
 A solitary object and sublime,
 Above all height! like an ærial cross
 Stationed alone upon a spiry rock
 Of the Chartreuse, for worship. Thus was man
 Ennobled outwardly before my sight,
 And thus my heart was early introduced
 To an unconscious love and reverence
 Of human nature; hence the human form
 To me became an index of delight,
 Of grace and honour, power and worthiness.

W. WORDSWORTH.

20.

Each and All.

LITTLE thinks, in the field, yon red-cloaked clown,
 Of thee from the hill-top looking down;
 The heifer that lows in the upland farm,
 Far-heard, lows not thine ear to charm;
 The sexton, tolling his bell at noon,
 Deems not that great Napoleon
 Stops his horse, and lists with delight,
 Whilst his files sweep round yon Alpine height;
 Nor knowest thou what argument
 Thy life to thy neighbour's creed has lent.
 All are needed by each one—
 Nothing is fair or good alone.
 I thought the sparrow's note from heaven,
 Singing at dawn on the alder bough;
 I brought him home, in his nest, at even.
 He sings the song, but it pleases not now;
 For I did not bring home the river and sky:
 He sang to my ear—they sang to my eye.

The delicate shells lay on the shore ;
The bubbles of the latest wave
Fresh pearls to their enamel gave,
And the bellowing of the savage sea
Greeted their safe escape to me.
I wiped away the weeds and foam—
I fetched my sea-born treasures home ;
But the poor, unsightly, noisome things
Had left their beauty on the shore,
With the sun, and the sand, and the wild uproar.

The lover watched his graceful maid,
As 'mid the virgin train she strayed ;
Nor knew her beauty's best attire
Was woven still by the snow-white choir.
At last she came to his hermitage,
Like the bird from the woodlands to the cage ;
The gay enchantment was undone—
A gentle wife, but fairy none.

Then I said, " I covet truth ;
Beauty is unripe childhood's cheat—
I leave it behind with the games of youth."
As I spoke, beneath my feet
The ground-pine curled its pretty wreath,
Running over the club-moss burrs ;
I inhaled the violet's breath ;
Around me stood the oaks and firs ;
Pine-cones and acorns lay on the ground ;
Over me soared the eternal sky,
Full of light and of deity ;
Again I saw, again I heard,
The rolling river, the morning bird ;
Beauty through my senses stole—
I yielded myself to the perfect whole.

R. W. EMERSON.

21.

The Art of Narrative.

A STORY, in which native humour reigns,
Is often useful, always entertains :
A graver fact, enlisted on your side,
May furnish illustration, well applied ;

But sedentary weavers of long tales
Give me the fidgets, and my patience fails.
'Tis the most asinine employ on earth,
To hear them tell of parentage and birth,
And echo conversations dull and dry,
Embellished with—"He said,"—and,——"So said I."
At every interview their route the same,
The repetition makes attention lame :
We bustle up with unsuccessful speed,
And in the saddest part cry—"Droll indeed!"
The path of narrative with care pursue,
Still making probability your clue ;
On all the vestiges of truth attend,
And let them guide you to a decent end.
Of all ambitions man may entertain,
The worst that can invade a sickly brain,
Is that which angles hourly for surprise,
And baits its hook with prodigies and lies.
Credulous infancy, or age as weak,
Are fittest auditors for such to seek,
Who to please others will themselves disgrace,
Yet please not, but affront you to your face.
A great retailer of this curious ware,
Having unloaded, and made many stare,
"Can this be true?"—an arch observer cries ;
"Yes, (rather moved) I saw it with these eyes !"
"Sir! I believe it on that ground alone ;
I could not, had I seen it with my own."
A tale should be judicious, clear, succinct ;
The language plain, the incidents well linked.
Tell not as new what everybody knows,
And, new or old, still hasten to a close ;
There centring in a focus, round and neat,
Let all your rays of information meet.
What neither yields us profit nor delight,
Is like a nurse's lullaby at night ;
Guy Earl of Warwick and fair Eleanore,
Or giant-killing Jack, would please me more.

W. COWPER.

22.

Excess of Epithets, Enfeebling to Poetry.

Friend.

MASTER CAPERWIT, before you read, pray tell me,
Have your verses any adjectives?

Caperwit.

Adjectives! would you have a poem without
Adjectives! they are the flower, the grace of all our language.

A well-chosen epithet doth give new soul
To fainting poesy, and makes every verse
A bride! With adjectives we bait our lines,
When we do fish for gentlewomen's loves,
And with their sweetness catch the nibbling ear
Of amorous ladies; with the music of
These ravishing nouns we charm the silken tribe,
And make the gallant melt with apprehension
Of the rare word. I will maintain it against
A bundle of grammarians, in poetry
The substantive itself cannot subsist
Without its adjective.

Friend.

But for all that,
Those words would sound more full, methinks, that are not
So larded; and if I might counsel you,
You should compose a sonnet clean without them.
A row of stately substantives would march
Like Switzers, and bear all the fields before them;
Carry their weight; show fair, like deeds enrolled;
Not writs, that are first made and after filled.
Thence first came up the title of blank verse;—
You know, sir, what blank signifies?—when the sense,
First framed, is tied with adjectives like points,
And could not hold together without wedges:
Hang it, 'tis pedantic, vulgar poetry.
Let children, when they versify, stick here
And there these peddling words for want of matter.
Poets write masculine numbers.

J. SHIRLEY.

23.

The Bailiff's Daughter of Islington.

THERE was a youth, and a well-beloved youth,
And he was a Squire's son;
He loved a bailiff's daughter dear,
That lived in Islington.

Yet she, being coy, would not believe
That he did love her so,
Nor would she any countenance
Unto this young man show.

But when his friends did understand
His fond and foolish mind,
They sent him up to fair London,
An apprentice him to bind.

And now he's gone 'tis seven long years,
And never his love could see:
"O many a tear have I shed for her sake,
When she little thought of me!"

One day the maids of Islington
Went forth to sport and play;
And then the bailiff's daughter dear,
She secretly stole away.

She pulled off her pretty gown of pink,
And put on ragged attire,
And to fair London she would go,
For her true love to enquire.

And as she went along the road,
The weather being hot and dry,
She sat her down on a grassy bank,
And her true love came riding by.

She started up, with a colour so red,
Catching hold of his bridle-rein:
"One penny, one penny, kind sir," she said,
"Would ease me of much pain."

"Before I give you one penny, sweetheart,
Pray tell me where you were born."

"At Islington, kind sir," said she,
"Where I have had many a scorn."

"I prithee, sweetheart, then tell to me,
O tell me whether you know
The bailiff's daughter of Islington?"
"She's dead, sir, long ago."

"If she be dead, then take my horse,
My saddle and bridle also;
For I'll sail away to some far country,
Where no man shall me know."

"O stay, good youth! O look, dear love!
She standeth by thy side;
She's here alive, she is not dead,
She's ready to be thy bride."

"O farewell grief, and welcome joy,
Ten thousand times, therefore!
For now I have found mine own true love,
Whom I thought I should never see more."

24.

John Gilpin.

JOHN GILPIN was a citizen
Of credit and renown,
A train-band captain eke was he
Of famous London town.

John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear,
"Though wedded we have been
These twice ten tedious years, yet we
No holiday have seen.

"To-morrow is our wedding-day,
And we will then repair
Unto the Bell at Edmonton,
All in a chaise and pair.

"My sister, and my sister's child,
Myself, and children three,
Will fill the chaise; so you must ride
On horseback after we."

He soon replied, "I do admire
Of womankind but one,
And you are she, my dearest dear,
Therefore it shall be done.

"I am a linen-draper bold,
As all the world doth know,
And my good friend the calend'rer
Will lend his horse to go."

Quoth Mrs. Gilpin, "That's well said;
And for that wine is dear,
We will be furnished with our own,
Which is both bright and clear."

John Gilpin kissed his loving wife;
O'erjoyed was he to find,
That, though on pleasure she was bent,
She had a frugal mind.

The morning came, the chaise was brought,
But yet was not allowed
To drive up to the door, lest all
Should say that she was proud.

So three doors off the chaise was stayed,
Where they did all get in;
Six precious souls, and all agog
To dash through thick and thin.

Smack went the whip, round went the wheels,
Were never folk so glad;
The stones did rattle underneath,
As if Cheapside were mad.

John Gilpin, at his horse's side
Seized fast the flowing mane,
And up he got, in haste to ride,—
But soon came down again;

For saddle-tree scarce reached had he
His journey to begin,
When, turning round his head, he saw
Three customers come in.

So down he came; for loss of time,
Although it grieved him sore,
Yet loss of pence, full well he knew,
Would trouble him much more.

'Twas long before the customers
Were suited to their mind,
When Betty screaming came down stairs,
"The wine is left behind!"

"Good lack!" quoth he—"yet bring to me,
My leathern belt likewise,
In which I bear my trusty sword
When I do exercise."

Now Mistress Gilpin (careful soul!)
Had two stone bottles found,
To hold the liquor that she loved,
And keep it safe and sound.

Each bottle had a curling ear,
Through which the belt he drew,
And hung a bottle on each side,
To make his balance true.

Then over all, that he might be
Equipped from top to toe,
His long red cloak, well brushed and neat,
He manfully did throw.

Now see him mounted once again
Upon his nimble steed,
Full slowly pacing o'er the stones,
With caution and good heed.

But finding soon a smoother road
Beneath his well-shod feet,
The snorting beast began to trot,
Which galled him in his seat.

So "Fair and softly," John he cried,
 But John he cried in vain ;
 That trot became a gallop soon,
 In spite of curb and rein.

So stooping down, as needs he must
 Who cannot sit upright,
 He grasped the mane with both his hands,
 And eke with all his might.

His horse, who never in that sort
 Had handled been before,
 What thing upon his back had got
 Did wonder more and more.

Away went Gilpin, neck or naught ;
 Away went hat and wig !
 He little dreamt, when he set out,
 Of running such a rig.

The wind did blow, the cloak did fly,
 Like streamer long and gay,
 Till, loop and button failing both,
 At last it flew away !

Then might all people well discern
 The bottles he had slung ;
 A bottle swinging at each side,
 As hath been said or sung.

The dogs did bark, the children screamed,
 Up flew the windows all ;
 And every soul cried out, "Well done !"
 As loud as he could bawl.

Away went Gilpin—who but he ?
 His fame soon spread around :
 "He carries weight ! he rides a race !
 'Tis for a thousand pound."

And still, as fast as he drew near,
 'Twas wonderful to view,
 How in a trice the turnpike men
 Their gates wide open threw.

And now, as he went bowing down
His reeking head full low,
The bottles twain behind his back
Were shattered at a blow.

Down ran the wine into the road,
Most piteous to be seen,
Which made his horse's flanks to smoke
As they had basted been.

But still he seemed to carry weight
With leathern girdle braced ;
For all might see the bottle necks
Still dangling at his waist.

Thus all through merry Islington
These gambols did he play,
Until he came unto the Wash
Of Edmonton so gay ;

And there he threw the Wash about
On both sides of the way,
Just like unto a trundling mop,
Or a wild goose at play.

At Edmonton, his loving wife
From the balcony spied
Her tender husband, wondering much
To see how he did ride.

"Stop, stop, John Gilpin ! here's the house,"
They all at once did cry ;
"The dinner waits, and we are tired :"
Said Gilpin, "So am I !"

But yet his horse was not a whit
Inclined to tarry there ;
For why ? his owner had a house
Full ten miles off, at Ware.

So like an arrow swift he flew,
Shot by an archer strong ;
So did he fly—which brings me to
The middle of my song.

Away went Glynis out of breath,
 And sore against his will,
 Till in his friend the calend'rer's
 His horse at last stood still.

The calend'rer, anxious to see
 His neighbor in such trim,
 Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,
 And thus addressed him :

"What news? what news? your tidings tell;
 Tell me you must and shall—
 Say why bare-headed you are come,
 Or why you come at all?"

Now Glynis had a pleasant wit,
 And loved a timely joke,
 And thus unto the calend'rer
 In merry guise he spoke :

"I came because your horse would come,
 And if I well forebode,
 My hat and wig will soon be here—
 They are upon the road."

The calend'rer, right glad to find
 His friend in merry pin,
 Returned him not a single word,
 But to the house went in ;

Whence straight he came with hat and wig,
 A wig that flowed behind,
 A hat not much the worse for wear,
 Each comely in its kind.

He held them up, and in his turn
 Thus showed his ready wit :
 "My head is twice as big as yours,
 They therefore needs must fit !

"But let me scrape the dirt away
 That hangs upon your face ;
 And stop and eat, for well you may
 Be in a hungry case."

Said John, "It is my wedding day,
And all the world would stare,
If wife should dine at Edmonton,
And I should dine at Ware."

So turning to his horse, he said,
"I am in haste to dine;
'Twas for your pleasure you came here,
You shall go back for mine."

Ah, luckless speech, and bootless boast!
For which he paid full dear;
For, while he spake, a braying ass
Did sing both loud and clear.

Whereat his horse did snort, as he
Had heard a lion roar,
And galloped off with all his might,
As he had done before!

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went Gilpin's hat and wig;
He lost them sooner than at first,
For why?—they were too big.

Now Mistress Gilpin, when she saw
Her husband posting down
Into the country far away,
She pulled out half a crown;

And thus unto the youth she said,
That drove them to the Bell,
"This shall be yours, when you bring back
My husband safe and well."

The youth did ride, and soon did meet
John coming back again;
Whom in a trice he tried to stop,
By catching at his rein;

But, not performing what he meant,
And gladly would have done,
The frightened steed he frightened more,
And made him faster run.

34 *Short Readings from English Poetry.*

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went post-boy at his heels,
The post-boy's horse right glad to miss
The lumbering of the wheels.

Six gentlemen upon the road,
Thus seeing Gilpin fly,
The post-boy scampering in the rear,
They raised the hue and cry :—

“ Stop thief! stop thief!—a highwayman !”
Not one of them was mute ;
And all and each that passed that way
Did join in the pursuit.

And now the turnpike gates again
Flew open in short space ;
The toll-men thinking, as before,
That Gilpin rode a race.

And so he did, and won it too,
For he got first to town ;
Nor stopped till where he had got up
He did again get down.

Now let us sing, long live the king,
And Gilpin, long live he ;
And when he next doth ride abroad,
May I be there to see !

W. COWPER.

25.

King John and the Abbot of Canterbury.

AN ancient story I'll tell you anon,
Of a notable Prince, that was called King John ;
He ruled our England with main and with might,
But he did great wrong, and maintained little right.

And I'll tell you a story, a story so merry,
Concerning the Abbot of Canterbury ;
How for his housekeeping and high renown,
They rode post to bring him to London town.

A hundred men, as the King heard say,
The Abbot kept in his house every day ;
And fifty gold chains, without any doubt,
In velvet coats waited the Abbot about.

"How now, Father Abbot? I hear it of thee,
Thou keepest a far better house than me ;
And for thy housekeeping and high renown,
I fear thou work'st treason against my crown."

"My liege," quoth the Abbot, "I would it were known,
I am spending nothing but what is my own ;
And I trust your Grace will not put me in fear
For spending my own true-gotten gear."

"Yes, yes, Father Abbot, thy fault is high,
And now for the same thou needest must die ;
And except thou canst answer me questions three,
Thy head struck off from thy body shall be.

"And first," quo' the King, "as I sit here,
With my crown of gold on my head so fair,
Among all my liegemen of noble birth,
Thou must tell to one penny what I am worth.

"Secondly, tell me, beyond all doubt,
How soon I may ride the whole world about ;
And at the third question thou must not shrink,
But tell me here truly, what do I think?"

"O these are deep questions for my shallow wit,
And I cannot answer your Grace as yet :
But if you will give me a fortnight's space,
I'll do my endeavours to answer your Grace."

"Now a fortnight's space to thee will I give,
And that is the longest thou hast to live ;
For unless thou answer my questions three,
Thy life and thy lands are forfeit to me."

Away rode the Abbot, all sad at this word ;
He wrote to Cambridge and Oxenford ;
But never a doctor there was so wise,
That could by his learning an answer devise.

Then home rode the Abbot, with comfort so cold,
And he met his Shepherd a-going to fold :
"Now, good Lord Abbot, you are welcome home ;
What news do you bring us from great King John ?"

"Sad news, sad news, Shepherd, I must give ;
That I have but three days more to live.
I must answer the King his questions three,
Or my head struck off from my body shall be.

"The first is to tell him, as he sits there,
With his crown of gold on his head so fair,
Among all his liegemen of noble birth,
To within one penny what he is worth.

"The second to tell him, beyond all doubt,
How soon he may ride this whole world about ;
And at question the third I must not shrink,
But tell him there truly, what does he think ?"

"O cheer up, my Lord ; did you never hear yet
That a fool may teach a wise man wit ?
Lend me four serving-men, horse, and apparel,
And I'll ride to London to answer your quarrel.

"With your pardon, it oft has been told to me
That I'm like your lordship as ever can be :
And if you will but lend me your gown,
There is none shall know us at London town."

"Now horses and serving-men thou shalt have,
With sumptuous raiment gallant and brave ;
With crozier, and mitre, and rochet, and cope,
Fit to draw near to our Father the Pope."

"Now welcome, Sir Abbot," the King he did say,
"Tis well thou'rt come back to keep thy day ;
For and if thou canst answer my questions three,
Thy life and thy living both saved shall be.

"And first, as thou seest me sitting here,
With my crown of gold on my head so fair,
Among all my liegemen of noble birth,—
Tell to one penny what I am worth ?"

"For thirty pence our Saviour was sold
Among the false Jews, as I have been told ;
And twenty-nine is the worth of thee ;
For I think thou art one penny worse than he."

The King he laughed, and swore by St. Bittle,
"I did not think I was worth so little !
Now secondly, tell me, beyond all doubt,
How soon I may ride this world about?"

"You must rise with the sun, and ride with the same,
Until the next morning he riseth again ;
And then your Grace need never doubt
But in twenty-four hours you 'll ride it about."

The King he laughed, and swore by St. Jone,
"I did not think I could do it so soon !
Now from question the third thou must not shrink,
But tell me truly, what do I think?"

"Yea, that I shall do, and make your Grace merry,
You think I 'm the Abbot of Canterbury ;
But I 'm his poor Shepherd, as plain you may see,
That am come to beg pardon for him and for me."

The King he laughed, and swore by the mass,
"I 'll make thee Lord Abbot this day in his place !"
"Now nay, my Liege, be not in such speed ;
For, alas ! I can neither write nor read."

"Four nobles a week then I 'll give to thee,
For this merry jest thou hast shown to me ;
And tell the old Abbot, when thou gettest home,
Thou hast brought him free pardon from King John !"

26.

The Retired Cat.

A POET'S cat, sedate and grave,
As poet well could wish to have,
Was much addicted to enquire
For nooks to which she might retire,
And where, secure as mouse in chink,
She might repose, or sit and think.

I know not where she caught the trick—
Nature perhaps herself had cast her
In such a mould philosophique,
Or else she learned it of her master.
Sometimes ascending, debonnair,
An apple-tree, or lofty pear,
Lodged with convenience in the fork,
She watched the gardener at his work;
Sometimes her ease and solace sought
In an old empty watering-pot :
There, wanting nothing save a fan,
To seem some nymph in her sedan,
Apparelled in exactest sort,
And ready to be borne to court.

But love of change, it seems, has place
Not only in our wiser race ;
Cats also feel, as well as we,
That passion's force, and so did she.
Her climbing, she began to find,
Exposed her too much to the wind,
And the old utensil of tin
Was cold and comfortless within :
She therefore wished instead of those
Some place of more serene repose,
Where neither cold might come, nor air
Too rudely wanton with her hair,
And sought it in the likeliest mode
Within her master's snug abode.

A drawer, it chanced, at bottom lined
With linen of the softest kind,
With such as merchants introduce
From India for the ladies' use,
A drawer impending o'er the rest,
Half open in the topmost chest,
Of depth enough, and none to spare,
Invited her to slumber there.
Puss, with delight beyond expression,
Surveyed the scene, and took possession.
Recumbent at her ease, ere long,
And lulled by her own humdrum song,
She left the cares of life behind,
And slept as she would sleep her last,
When in came, housewifely inclined,

The chambermaid, and shut it fast ;
By no malignity impelled,
But all unconscious whom it held.
Awakened by the shock, cried Puss,
" Was ever cat attended thus ?
The open drawer was left, I see,
Merely to prove a nest for me ;
For soon as I was well composed,
Then came the maid, and it was closed.
How smooth these 'kerchiefs, and how sweet !
O what a delicate retreat !
I will resign myself to rest,
Till Sol, declining in the west,
Shall call to supper, when, no doubt,
Susan will come and let me out."

The evening came, the sun descended,
And Puss remained still unattended.
The night rolled tardily away
(With her indeed 'twas never day),
The sprightly morn her course renewed,
The evening grey again ensued,
And Puss came into mind no more
Than if entombed the day before.
With hunger pinched, and pinched for room,
She now presaged approaching doom,
Nor slept a single wink, or purred,
Conscious of jeopardy incurred.

That night, by chance, the poet watching,
Heard an inexplicable scratching ;
His noble heart went pit-a-pat,
And to himself he said, " What 's that ?"
He drew the curtain at his side,
And forth he peeped, but nothing spied ;
Yet, by his ear directed, guessed
Something imprisoned in the chest,
And, doubtful what, with prudent care
Resolved it should continue there.
At length a voice which well he knew,
A long and melancholy mew,
Saluting his poetic ears,
Consoled him, and dispelled his fears :
He left his bed, he trod the floor,
He 'gan in haste the drawers explore,

The lowest first, and without stop
 The rest in order to the top.
 For 'tis a truth well known to most,
 That whatsoever thing is lost,
 We seek it, ere it come to light,
 In every cranny but the right.
 Forth skipped the cat, not now replete
 As erst with airy self-conceit,
 Nor in her own fond apprehension
 A theme for all the world's attention,
 But modest, sober, cured of all
 Her notions hyperbolical,
 And wishing for a place of rest
 Anything rather than a chest.
 Then stepped the poet into bed
 With this reflection in his head:

MORAL.

Beware of too sublime a sense
 Of your own worth and consequence:
 The man who dreams himself so great,
 And his importance of such weight,
 That all around, in all that's done
 Must move and act for him alone,
 Will learn in school of tribulation
 The folly of his expectation.

W. COWPER.

27.

Fable.

UPON a time, Reputation, Love, and Death
 Would travel o'er the world: and 'twas concluded
 That they should part, and take three several ways.
 Death told them, they should find him in great battles,
 Or cities plagued with plagues: Love gives them counsel
 To inquire for him 'mongst unambitious shepherds,
 Where dowries were not talked of; and sometimes,
 'Mongst quiet kindred that have nothing left
 By their dead parents: "Stay, quoth Reputation;
 "Do not forsake me, for it is my nature,
 If once I part from any man I meet,
 I am never found again."

J. WEBSTER.

28.

**On a Favourite Cat, Drowned in a Tub
of Gold-fishes.**

'Twas on a lofty vase's side
Where China's gayest art had dyed
The azure flowers that blow,
Demurest of the tabby kind
The pensive Selima, reclined,
Gazed on the lake below.

Her conscious tail her joy declared :
The fair round face, the snowy beard,
The velvet of her paws,
Her coat that with the tortoise vies,
Her ears of jet, and emerald eyes—
She saw, and purred applause.

Still had she gazed, but 'midst the tide
Two angel forms were seen to glide,
The Genii of the stream :
Their scaly armour's Tyrian hue
Through richest purple, to the view
Betrayed a golden gleam.

The hapless Nymph with wonder saw :
A whisker first, and then a claw
With many an ardent wish
She stretched, in vain, to reach the prize—
What female heart can gold despise?
What Cat's averse to Fish?

Presumptuous maid ! with looks intent
Again she stretched, again she bent,
Nor knew the gulf between—
Malignant Fate sat by and smiled—
The slippery verge her feet beguiled ;
She tumbled headlong in !

Eight times emerging from the flood
She mewed to every watery god
Some speedy aid to send :—
No Dolphin came, no Nereid¹ stirred,
Nor cruel Tom nor Susan heard—
A favourite has no friend !

¹ A sea-nymph.

From hence, ye Beauties ! undeceived
 Know one false step is ne'er retrieved,
 And be with caution bold :
 Not all that tempts your wandering eyes
 And heedless hearts, is lawful prize,
 Nor all that glisters, gold !

T. GRAY.

29.

A National Trait.

It seems as if we Britons were ordained,
 By way of wholesome curb upon our pride,
 To fear each other, fearing none beside.
 The cause perhaps enquiry may descry,
 Self-searching with an introverted eye,
 Concealed within an unsuspected part,
 The vainest corner of our own vain heart :
 For ever aiming at the world's esteem,
 Our self-importance ruins its own scheme ;
 In other eyes our talents rarely shown,
 Become at length so splendid in our own,
 We dare not risk them into public view,
 Lest they miscarry of what seems their due.
 True modesty is a discerning grace,
 And only blushes in the proper place ;
 But counterfeit is blind, and skulks through fear,
 Where 'tis a shame to be ashamed to appear :
 Humility, the parent of the first,
 The last, by vanity produced and nursed.
 The circle formed, we sit in silent state,
 Like figures drawn upon a dial-plate ;
 "Yes, ma'am," and "No, ma'am," uttered softly, show
 Every five minutes how the minutes go ;
 Each individual, suffering a constraint,
 Poetry may, but colours cannot, paint ;
 And, if in close committee on the sky,
 Reports it hot or cold, or wet or dry,
 And finds a changing clime a happy source
 Of wise reflection and well-timed discourse.
 We next inquire, but softly and by stealth,
 Like conservators of the public health,

Of epidemic throats, if such there are,
And coughs and rheums, and phthisic and catarrh.
That theme exhausted, a wide chasm ensues,
Filled up at last with interesting news ;
Who danced with whom, and who are like to wed,
And who is hanged, and who is brought to bed :
But fear to call a more important cause,
As if 'twere treason against English laws.
The visit paid, with ecstasy we come,
As from a seven years' transportation, home,
And there resume an unembarrassed brow,
Recovering what we lost, we know not how,
The faculties that seemed reduced to naught,
Expression and the privilege of thought.

W. COWPER.

30.

Frank Hospitality.

GENTLEMEN, welcome! 'tis a word I use,
From me expect no further compliment ;
Nor do I name it often at one meeting ;
Once spoke, to those that understand me best,
And know I always purpose as I speak,
Hath ever yet sufficed : so let it you,
Nor do I love that common phrase of guests,
As, "We make bold ;" or, "We are troublesome,"
"We take you unprovided," and the like !
I know you understanding gentlemen,
And knowing me, cannot persuade yourselves
With me you shall be troublesome or bold.
Nor shall you find,
Being set to meat, that I'll excuse your fare,
Or say, "I am sorry it falls out so poor,"
And, "Had I known your coming, we'd have had
Such things or such ;" nor blame my cook, to say
This dish or that hath not been sauced with care :
Words fitting best a common hostess' mouth,
When there's perhaps some just cause of dislike ;
But not the table of a gentleman.

T. HEYWOOD AND R. BROOME.

31

Defence of Allegory.

WHEREAS some say, *A cloud is in his head,*
 That doth but show his wisdom's covered
 With its own mantle. And to stir the mind
 To a search after what its fair world find,
 Things that seem to be hid in words obscure
 Do but the godly mind the more allure
 To study what those sayings should contain,
 That speak to us in such a cloudy strain.
 I also know a dark similitude
 Will on the fancy more itself intrude,
 And will stick faster in the heart and head
 Than things from similes not borrowed.

J. BUNYAN.

32

A Comparison.

THE lapse of time and rivers is the same,
 Both speed their journey with a restless stream;
 The silent pace, with which they steal away,
 No wealth can bribe, no prayers persuade to stay;
 Alike irrevocable both when past,
 And a wide ocean swallows both at last.
 Though each resemble each in every part,
 A difference strikes at length the musing heart;
 Streams never flow in vain; where streams abound,
 How laughs the land with various plenty crowned!
 But time, that should enrich the nobler mind,
 Neglected, leaves a dreary waste behind.

W. COWPER.

33

The Twins.

"Give" and "It shall be given unto you."

GRAND rough old Martin Luther
 Bloomed fables—flowers on furze,
 The better the uncouth:
 Do roses stick like burrs?

A beggar asked an alms
One day at an abbey-door,
Said Luther; but, seized with qualms,
The Abbot replied, "We're poor!"

"Poor, who had plenty once,
When gifts fell thick as rain:
But they give us naught, for the nonce,
And how should we give again?"

Then the beggar, "See your sins!
Of old, unless I err,
Ye had brothers for inmates, twins,
Date and Dabitur.

"While Date was in good case
Dabitur flourished too:
For Dabitur's lenten face
No wonder if Date rue.

"Would ye retrieve the one?
Try and make plump the other!
When Date's penance is done,
Dabitur helps his brother.

"Only, beware relapse!"
The Abbot hung his head.
This beggar might be perhaps
An angel, Luther said.

R. BROWNING.

34-

The Pied Piper of Hamelin.

HAMELIN Town's in Brunswick,
By famous Hanover city;
The river Weser, deep and wide,
Washes its wall on the southern side;
A pleasanter spot you never spied;
But, when begins my ditty,
Almost five hundred years ago,
To see the townsfolk suffer so
From vermin, was a pity.

Rats!

They fought the dogs and killed the cats,
And bit the babies in the cradles,
And ate the cheeses out of the vats,
And licked the soup from the cooks' own ladles,
Split open the kegs of salted sprats,
Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,
And even spoiled the women's chats,
By drowning their speaking
With shrieking and squeaking
In fifty different sharps and flats.

At last the people in a body
To the Town Hall came flocking:
"Tis clear," cried they, "our Mayor's a noddie;
And as for our Corporation—shocking
To think we buy gowns lined with ermine
For dolts that can't or won't determine
What's best to rid us of our vermin!
You hope, because you're old and obese,
To find in the furry civic robe ease?
Rouse up, sirs! Give your brains a racking
To find the remedy we're lacking,
Or, sure as fate, we'll send you packing!"
At this the Mayor and Corporation
Quaked with a mighty consternation.

An hour they sat in council,
At length the Mayor broke silence:
"For a guilder I'd my ermine gown sell,
I wish I were a mile hence!
It's easy to bid one rack one's brain—
I'm sure my poor head aches again,
I've scratched it so, and all in vain.
Oh for a trap, a trap, a trap!"
Just as he said this, what should hap
At the chamber door but a gentle tap?
"Bless us," cried the Mayor, "what's that?"
(With the Corporation as he sat,
Looking little though wondrous fat;
Nor brighter was his eye, nor moister
Than a too-long-opened oyster,
Save when at noon his paunch grew mutinous
For a plate of turtle green and glutinous)

"Only a scraping of shoes in the mat?
Anything like the sound of a rat
Makes my heart go pit-a-pat!"

"Come in!" the Mayor cried, looking bigger:
And in did come the strangest figure!
His queer long coat from heel to head
Was half of yellow and half of red,
And he himself was tall and thin,
With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin,
And light loose hair, yet swarthy skin;
No tuft on cheek, nor beard on chin,
But lips where smiles went out and in;
There was no guessing his kith and kin:
And nobody could enough admire
The tall man and his quaint attire.
Quoth one: "It's as my great-grandsire,
Starting up at the Trump of Doom's tone,
Had walked this way from his painted tombstone!"

He advanced to the council-table:
And, "Please, your honours," said he, "I'm able,
By means of a secret charm, to draw
All creatures living beneath the sun,
That creep or swim, or fly or run,
After me so as you never saw!
And I chiefly use my charm
On creatures that do people harm,
The mole, and toad, and newt, and viper,
And people call me the Pied Piper."
(And here they noticed round his neck
A scarf of red and yellow stripe,
To match with his coat of the self-same cheque;
And at the scarf's end hung a pipe;
And his fingers, they noticed, were ever straying,
As if impatient to be playing
Upon this pipe, as low it dangled
Over his vesture so old-fangled.)
"Yet," said he, "poor piper as I am,
In Tartary I freed the Cham,
Last June, from his huge swarms of gnats
I eased in Asia the Nizam
Of a monstrous brood of vampyre-bats:

And as for what your brain bewilders,
 If I can rid your town of rats
 Will you give me a thousand guilders?"
 "One? fifty thousand!"—was the exclamation
 Of the astonished Mayor and Corporation.

Into the street the Piper stept,
 Smiling first a little smile,
 As if he knew what magic slept
 In his quiet pipe the while;
 Then, like a musical adept,
 To blow the pipe his lips he wrinkled,
 And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled,
 Like a candle-flame where salt is sprinkled;
 And ere three shrill notes the pipe uttered,
 You heard as if an army muttered;
 And the muttering grew to a grumbling;
 And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling;
 And out of the houses the rats came tumbling.
 Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,
 Brown rats, black rats, grey rats, tawny rats,
 Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,
 Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,
 Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,
 Families by tens and dozens,
 Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives,—
 Followed the Piper for their lives.
 From street to street he piped advancing,
 And step for step they followed dancing,
 Until they came to the river Weser,
 Wherein all plunged and perished!
 --Save one who, stout as Julius Cæsar,
 Swam across and lived to carry
 (As he, the manuscript he cherished)
 To Rat-land home his commentary:
 Which was, "At the first shrill notes of the pipe,
 I heard a sound as of scraping tripe,
 And putting apples, wondrous ripe,
 Into a cider-press's gripe:
 And a moving away of pickle-tub boards,
 And a leaving ajar of conserve cupboards,
 And a drawing the corks of train-oil flasks,
 And a breaking the hoops of butter-casks:

And it seemed as if a voice
(Sweeter far than by harp or by psaltery
Is breathed) called out, 'O rats, rejoice!
The world is grown to one vast drysaltery!
So munch on, crunch on, take your nuncheon,
Breakfast, supper, dinner, luncheon!'
And just as a bulky sugar-puncheon,
All ready staved, like a great sun shone
Glorious scarce an inch before me,
Just as methought it said, 'Come, bore me!'
—I found the Weser rolling o'er me."

You should have heard the Hamelin people
Ringing the bells till they rocked the steeple.
"Go," cried the Mayor, "and get long poles,
Poke out the nests and block up the holes!
Consult with carpenters and builders,
And leave in our town not even a trace
Of the rats!"—when suddenly, up the face
Of the Piper perked in the market-place,
With a "First, if you please, my thousand guilders!"
A thousand guilders! The Mayor looked blue;
So did the Corporation too.
For council dinners made rare havoc
With Claret, Moselle, Vin-de-Grave, Hock;
And half the money would replenish
Their cellar's biggest butt with Rhenish.
To pay this sum to a wandering fellow
With a gypsy coat of red and yellow!
"Beside," quoth the Mayor with a knowing wink,
"Our business was done at the river's brink;
We saw with our eyes the vermin sink,
And what's dead can't come to life, I think.
So, friend, we're not the folks to shrink
From the duty of giving you something for drink,
And a matter of money to put in your poke;
But as for the guilders, what we spoke
Of them, as you very well know, was in joke.
Beside, our losses have made us thrifty.
A thousand guilders! Come, take fifty!"

The Piper's face fell, and he cried,
"No trifling! I can't wait, beside!
I've promised to visit by dinnertime
Bagdad, and accept the prime

Of the Head-Cook's pottage, all he's rich in,
For having left, in the Caliph's kitchen,
Of a nest of scorpions no survivor :
With him I proved no bargain-driver,
With you, don't think I'll bate a stiver !
And folks who put me in a passion
May find me pipe after another fashion."

"How?" cried the Mayor, "d'ye think I brook
Being worse treated than a Cook ?
Insulted by a lazy ribald,
With idle pipe and vesture piebald ?
You threaten us, fellow ? Do your worst,
Blow your pipe there till you burst !"

Once more he stept into the street,
And to his lips again
Laid his long pipe of smooth straight cane ;
And ere he blew three notes (such sweet
Soft notes as yet musician's cunning
Never gave the enraptured air)
There was a rustling that seemed like a bustling
Of merry crowds justling at pitching and hustling,
Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes clattering,
Little hands clapping and little tongues chattering,
And, like fowls in a farm-yard when barley is scattering,
Out came the children running.
All the little boys and girls,
With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,
And sparkling eyes and teeth like pearls,
Tripping and skipping, ran merrily after
The wonderful music with shouting and laughter.
The Mayor was dumb, and the Council stood
As if they were changed into blocks of wood,
Unable to move a step, or cry
To the children merrily skipping by,
Could only follow with the eye
That joyous crowd at the Piper's back.
But how the Mayor was on the rack,
And the wretched Council's bosoms beat,
As the Piper turned from the High Street
To where the Weser rolled its waters
Right in the way of their sons and daughters !
However he turned from South to West,

And to Koppelberg Hill his steps addressed,
And after him the children pressed;
Great was the joy in every breast.
"He never can cross that mighty top!
He's forced to let the piping drop,
And we shall see our children stop!"
When, lo, as they reached the mountain-side,
A wondrous portal opened wide,
As if a cavern was suddenly hollowed;
And the Piper advanced, and the children followed;
And when all were in to the very last,
The door in the mountain-side shut fast.
Did I say, all? No! One was lame,
And could not dance the whole of the way;
And in after years, if you would blame
His sadness, he was used to say,—
"It's dull in our town since my playmates left!
I can't forget that I'm bereft
Of all the pleasant sights they see,
Which the Piper also promised me;
For he led us, he said, to a joyous land,
Joining the town, and just at hand,
Where waters gushed and fruit-trees grew,
And flowers put forth a fairer hue,
And everything was strange and new;
The sparrows were brighter than peacocks here,
And their dogs outran our fallow deer,
And honey-bees had lost their stings,
And horses were born with eagles' wings;
And just as I became assured
My lame foot would be speedily cured,
The music stopped, and I stood still,
And found myself outside the hill,
Left alone against my will,
To go now limping as before,
And never hear of that country more!"

Alas, alas for Hamelin!
There came into many a burgher's pate
A text which says that heaven's gate
Opes to the rich at as easy rate
As the needle's eye takes a camel in!
The Mayor sent East, West, North, and South,
To offer the Piper, by word of mouth,

Wherever it was men's lot to find him,
 Silver and gold to his heart's content,
 If he'd only return the way he went,
 And bring the children behind him.
 But when they saw 'twas a lost endeavour,
 And Piper and dancers were gone for ever,
 They made a decree that lawyers never

Should think their records dated duly
 If, after the day of the month and year,
 These words did not as well appear,
 "And so long after what happened here

On the Twenty-second of July,
 Thirteen hundred and seventy-six :"
 And the better in memory to fix
 The place of the children's last retreat,
 They called it the Pied Piper's Street—
 Where any one playing on pipe or tabor
 Was sure for the future to lose his labour.

Nor suffered they hostelry or tavern
 To shock with mirth a street so solemn ;

But opposite the place of the cavern
 They wrote the story on a column,
 And on the great church-window painted
 The same, to make the world acquainted
 How their children were stolen away,
 And there it stands to this very day.

And I must not omit to say
 That in Transylvania there's a tribe
 Of alien people that ascribe
 The outlandish ways and dress
 On which their neighbours lay such stress,
 To their fathers and mothers having risen
 Out of some subterraneous prison
 Into which they were trepanned
 Long time ago in a mighty band
 Out of Hamelin town in Brunswick land,
 But how or why, they don't understand.

So, Willy, let me and you be wipers
 Of scores out with all men—especially pipers !
 And, whether they pipe us free from rats or from mice,
 If we've promised them aught, let us keep our promise !

R. BROWNING.

35.

The Romance of the Swan's Nest.

LITTLE Ellie sits alone
'Mid the beeches of a meadow
By a stream-side on the grass,
And the trees are showering down
Doubles of their leaves in shadow
On her shining hair and face.

She has thrown her bonnet by,
And her feet she has been dipping
In the shallow water's flow :
Now she holds them nakedly
In her hands, all sleek and dripping,
While she rocketh to and fro.

Little Ellie sits alone,
And the smile she softly uses
Fills the silence like a speech,
While she thinks what shall be done,
And the sweetest pleasure chooses
For her future within reach.

Little Ellie, in her smile,
Chooses—" I will have a lover,
Riding on a steed of steeds :
He shall love me without guile,
And to *him* I will discover
The swan's nest among the reeds.

" And the steed shall be red-roan,
And the lover shall be noble,
With an eye that takes the breath :
And the lute he plays upon
Shall strike ladies into trouble,
As his sword strikes men to death."

" And the steed it shall be shod
All in silver, housed in azure,
And the mane shall swim the wind ;
And the hoofs along the sod
Shall flash onward and keep measure,
Till the shepherds look behind.

"But my lover will not prize
All the glory that he rides in,
When he gazes in my face :
He will say, 'O Love, thine eyes
Build the shrine my soul abides in,
And I kneel here for thy grace !'

"Then, ay, then he shall kneel low,
With the red-roan steed anear him
Which shall seem to understand,
Till I answer, 'Rise and go !
For the world must love and fear him
Whom I gift with heart and hand.'

"Then he will arise so pale,
I shall feel my own lips tremble
With a *yes* I must not say,
Nathless maiden-brave, 'Farewell,
I will utter, and dissemble—
'Light to-morrow with to-day !'

"Then he'll ride among the hills
To the wide world past the river,
There to put away all wrong ;
To make straight distorted wills,
And to empty the broad quiver
Which the wicked bear along.

"Three times shall a young foot-page
Swim the stream and climb the mountain
And kneel down beside my feet—
'Lo, my master sends this gage,
Lady, for thy pity's counting !
What wilt thou exchange for it?'

"And the first time, I will send
A white rosebud for a guerdon,
And the second time, a glove ;
But the third time—I may bend
From my pride, and answer—'Pardon,
If he comes to take my love.'

"Then the young foot-page will run,
Then my lover will ride faster,

Till he kneeleth at my knee :
 'I am a duke's eldest son,
 Thousand serfs do call me master,
 But, O Love, I love but *thee!*'
 "He will kiss me on the mouth
 Then, and lead me as a lover
 Through the crowds that praise his deeds:
 And, when soul-tied by one troth,
 Unto *him* I will discover
 That swan's nest among the reeds."
 Little Ellie, with her smile
 Not yet ended, rose up gaily,
 Tied the bonnet, donned the shoe,
 And went homeward round a mile,
 Just to see, as she did daily,
 What more eggs were with the two.
 Pushing through the elm-tree copse,
 Winding up the stream, light-hearted,
 Where the osier pathway leads,
 Past the boughs she stoops—and stops.
 Lo, the wild swan had deserted,
 And a rat had gnawed the reeds!
 Ellie went home sad and slow.
 If she found the lover ever,
 With his red-roan steed of steeds,
 Sooth I know not; but I know
 She could never shew him—never,
 That swan's nest among the reeds!

E. B. BROWNING.

36.

The Forsaken Merman.

COME, dear children, let us away;
 Down and away below.
 Now my brothers call from the bay;
 Now the great winds shoreward blow;
 Now the salt tides seaward flow;
 Now the wild white horses play,
 Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.
 Children dear, let us away.
 This way, this way!

Call her once before you go.
Call once yet,
In a voice that she will know :
"Margaret! Margaret!"

Children's voices should be dear
(Call once more) to a mother's ear ;
Children's voices wild with pain.
Surely she will come again !
Call her once, and come away ;
This way, this way !

"Mother dear, we cannot stay.
The wild white horses foam and fret,"
Margaret! Margaret!

Come, dear children, come away down.
Call no more.
One last look at the white-walled town,
And the little grey church on the windy shore,
Then come down.
She will not come though you call all day.
Come away, come away.

Children dear, was it yesterday
We heard the sweet bells over the bay ?
In the caverns where we lay,
Through the surf and through the swell,
The far-off sound of a silver bell ?
Sand-strewn caverns cool and deep,
Where the winds are all asleep ;
Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,
Where the salt weed sways in the stream ;
Where the sea-beasts ranged all round
Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground,
Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
Dry their mail, and bask in the brine ;
Where great whales come sailing by,
Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
Round the world for ever and aye ?
When did music come this way ?
Children dear, was it yesterday ?

Children, dear, was it yesterday
(Call yet once) that she went away ?

Once she sat with you and me,
On a red-gold throne in the heart of the sea,
And the youngest sat on her knee.
She combed its bright hair, and she tended it well,
When down swung the sound of the far-off bell;
She sighed, she looked up through the clear green sea,
She said, "I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
In the little grey church on the shore to-day.
'Twill be Easter-time in the world—ah me!
And I lose my poor soul, Merman, here with thee."
I said, "Go up, dear heart, through the waves;
Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind sea-caves."
She smiled, she went up through the surf in the bay.
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, were we long alone?
"The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan;
Long prayers," I said, "in the world they say."
"Come," I said, and we rose through the surf in the bay.
We went up the beach in the sandy down
Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-walled town,
Through the narrow paved streets, where all was still,
To the little grey church on the windy hill.
From the church came a murmur of folk at their prayers,
But we stood without in the cold blowing airs.
We climbed on the graves, on the stones worn with rains,
And we gazed up the aisle through the small leaded panes.
She sat by the pillar; we saw her clear;
"Margaret, hist! come quick, we are here.
Dear heart," I said, "we are here alone.
The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan."
But, ah, she gave me never a look,
For her eyes were sealed to the holy book.
Loud prays the priest; shut stands the door;
Come away, children, call no more,
Come away, come down, call no more.

Down, down, down,
Down to the depths of the sea,
She sits at her wheel in the humming town,
Singing most joyfully.

Hark what she sings: "O joy, O joy,
From the humming street, and the child with its toy,
From the priest and the bell, and the holy well.

From the wheel where I spun,
 And the blessed light of the sun;
 And as she sings her fill,
 Singing most joyfully,
 Till the shuttle falls from her hand,
 And the whizzing wheel stands still.

She steals to the window, and looks at the sand;
 And over the sand at the sea;
 And her eyes are set in a stare;
 And anon there breaks a sigh,
 And anon there drops a tear,
 From a sorrow-clouded eye,
 And a heart sorrow-laden,
 A long, long sigh.

For the cold strange eyes of a little Mermaiden,
 And the gleam of her golden hair.

Come away, away, children,
 Come, children, come down.
 The hoarse wind blows colder;
 Lights shine in the town.
 She will start from her slumber
 When gusts shake the door;
 She will hear the winds howling,
 Will hear the waves roar.
 We shall see, while above us
 The waves roar and whirl,
 A ceiling of amber,
 A pavement of pearl.
 Singing, "Here came a mortal,
 But faithless was she,
 And alone dwell for ever
 The kings of the sea."

But, children, at midnight,
 When soft the winds blow,
 When clear falls the moonlight,
 When spring-tides are low;
 When sweet airs come seaward
 From heaths starred with broom;
 And high rocks throw mildly
 On the blanched sands a gloom:

Up the still, glistening beaches,
Up the creeks we will hie;
Over banks of bright seaweed
The ebb-tide leaves dry.
We will gaze from the sand-hills
At the white, sleeping town;
At the church on the hill-side—
And then come back, down.
Singing, "There dwells a loved one,
But cruel is she:
She left lonely for ever
The kings of the sea."

M. ARNOLD.

37.

The Hag.

THE Hag is astride,
This night for to ride,
The devil and she together;
Through thick and through thin,
Now out, and then in,
Though ne'er so foul be the weather.
A thorn or a bur
She takes for a spur;
With a lash of a bramble she rides now,
Through brakes and through briars,
O'er ditches and mires,
She follows the spirit that guides now.
No beast, for his food,
Dares now range the wood,
But hushed in his lair he lies lurking;
While mischiefs, by these,
On land and on seas,
At noon of night are a-working.
The storm will arise,
And trouble the skies
This night; and, more for the wonder,
The ghost from the tomb
Affrighted shall come,
Called out by the clap of the thunder.

R. HERRICK.

38.

Incantation.

WHEN the moon is on the wave,
And the glow-worm in the grass,
And the meteor on the grave,
And the wisp on the morass ;
When the falling stars are shooting,
And the answered owls are hooting,
And the silent leaves are still
In the shadow of the hill,
Shall my soul be upon thine,
With a power and with a sign.
Though thy slumber may be deep,
Yet thy spirit shall not sleep ;
There are shades which will not vanish,
There are thoughts thou canst not banish ;
By a power to thee unknown,
Thou canst never be alone ;
Thou art wrapt as with a shroud,
Thou art gathered in a cloud ;
And for ever shalt thou dwell
In the spirit of this spell.
Though thou seest me not pass by,
Thou shalt feel me with thine eye
As a thing that, though unseen,
May be near thee, and hath been ;
And when in that secret dread
Thou hast turned around thy head,
Thou shalt marvel I am not
As thy shadow on the spot,
And the power which thou dost feel
Shalt be what thou must conceal.
And a magic voice and verse
Hath baptized thee with a curse ;
And a spirit of the air
Hath begirt thee with a snare ;
In the wind there is a voice
Shall forbid thee to rejoice ;
And to thee shall Night deny
All the quiet of her sky ;
And the day shall have a sun,
Which shall make thee wish it done.

From thy false tears I did distil
An essence which hath strength to kill ;
From thy own heart I then did wring
The black blood in its blackest spring ;
From thy own smile I snatched the snake,
For there it coiled as in a brake ;
From thy own lip I drew the charm
Which gave all these their chiefest harm ;
In proving every poison known,
I found the strongest was thine own.

By thy cold breast and serpent smile,
By thy unfathomed gulfs of guile,
By that most seeming virtuous eye,
By thy shut soul's hypocrisy ;
By the perfection of thine art,
Which passed for human thine own heart ;
By thy delight in others' pain,
And by thy brotherhood of Cain,
I call upon thee ! and compel
Thyself to be thy proper Hell !

And on thy head I pour the vial
Which doth devote thee to this trial ;
Nor to slumber, nor to die,
Shall be in thy destiny ;
Though thy death shall still seem near
To thy wish, but as a fear ;
Lo ! the spell now works around thee,
And the clankless chain hath bound thee ;
O'er thy heart and brain together
Hath the word been passed—now wither !

LORD BYRON.

39.

Fragment: A Soul Known.

I AM as a spirit who has dwelt
Within his heart of hearts, and I have felt
His feelings, and have thought his thoughts, and known
The inmost converse of his soul, the tone
Unheard but in the silence of his blood,
When all the pulses in their multitude
Image the trembling calm of summer seas.
I have unlocked the golden melodies

Short Readings from English Poetry.

As a deep soul, as with a master-key,
He loosened them and bathed myself therein—
As an eagle in a thunder-mist
He flung his wings with lightning.

P. B. SHELLEY.

40.

Song of the Corsairs.

What is it to be whose heart hath tried,
On the waters wide,
The sea's maddening play,
The venture of that trackless way?
What is it to see the approaching night,
And deem danger to delight;
And see what ravens shun with more than real
The feebler faint—can only feel—
The rising bosom's inmost core
To swell and its spirit soar?
To die of death—if with us die our foes—
To see that seems even duller than repose:
To know when it will—we snatch the life of life—
To know what reck's it—by disease or strife?
To see him who crawls enamoured of decay,
Sliding to his couch, and sicken years away;
To see his thick breath, and shake his palsied head;
To see the fresh turf, and not the feverish bed.
To see him gasp by gasp he falters forth his soul,
Ours with one pang—one bound—escapes control.
His corse may boast its urn and narrow cave,
And they who loathed his life may gild his grave:
Ours are the tears, though few, sincerely shed,
When ocean shrouds and sepulchres our dead.
For us, even banquets fond regret supply
In the red cup that crowns our memory;
And the brief epitaph in danger's day,
To those who win at length divide the prey,
The memory, remembrance saddening o'er each brow,
That had the brave who fell exulted *now!*"

LORD BYRON.

41.

A Dance.

With a gliding motion like a flame
The dim vapour makes a path of glory,

A figure lithe, all white and saffron-robed,
Flashed right across the circle, and now stood
With ripened arms uplift and regal head,
Like some tall flower whose dark and intense heart
Lies half within a tulip-tinted cup.

Juan stood fixed and pale ; Pepita stepped
Backward within the ring : the voices fell
From shouts insistent to more passive tones
Half meaning welcome, half astonishment.
“ Lady Fedalma !—will she dance for us ? ”

But she, sole swayed by impulse passionate,
Feeling all life was music and all eyes
The warming quickening light that music makes,
Moved as, in dance religious, Miriam,
When on the Red Sea shore she raised her voice
And led the chorus of her people's joy ;
Or as the Trojan maids that reverent sang
Watching the sorrow-crownèd Hecuba :¹
Moved in slow curves voluminous, gradual,
Feeling and action flowing into one,
In Eden's natural taintless marriage-bond
Ardently modest, sensuously pure,
With young delight that wonders at itself
And throbs as innocent as opening flowers,
Knowing not comment—soilless, beautiful.
The spirit in her gravely glowing face
With sweet community informs her limbs,
Filling their fine gradation with the breath
Of virgin majesty ; as full vowelled words
Are new impregnate with the master's thought.
Even the chance-strayed delicate tendrils black,
That backward 'scape from out her wreathing hair—
Even the pliant folds that cling transverse
When with obliquely soaring bend altern
She seems a goddess quitting earth again—
Gather expression—a soft undertone
And resonance exquisite from the grand chord
Of her harmoniously bodied soul.

GEORGE ELIOT.

¹ The second wife of Priam, king of Troy. She lost nearly all her children in the Trojan war.

43.

A Night Revel and a Sunrise.

'MID a throng
Of maids and youths, old men, and matrons staid,
A medley of all tempers, I had passed
The night in dancing, gaiety, and mirth,
With din of instruments and shuffling feet,
And glancing forms, and tapers glittering,
And unaimed prattle flying up and down ;
Spirits upon the stretch, and here and there
Slight shocks of young love-liking interspersed,
Whose transient pleasure mounted to the head,
And tingled through the veins. Ere we retired,
The cock had crowed, and now the eastern sky
Was kindling, not unseen, from humble copse
And open field, through which the pathway wound,
And homeward led my steps. Magnificent
The morning rose, in memorable pomp,
Glorious, as e'er I had beheld—in front,
The sea lay laughing at a distance ; near,
The solid mountains shone, bright as the clouds,
Grain-tinctured, drenched in empyrean light ;
And in the meadows and the lower grounds
Was all the sweetness of a common dawn—
Dews, vapours, and the melody of birds,
And labourers going forth to till the fields.
Ah ! need I say, dear Friend ! that to the brim
My heart was full ; I made no vows, but vows
Were then made for me ; bond unknown to me
Was given, that I should be, else sinning greatly,
A dedicated Spirit.

W. WORDSWORTH.

44.

A Bearer of Evil Tidings.

The horse rushes home from the battlefield, thereby announcing the misfortune of his master.

FAST, fast, with heels wild spurning,
The dark-grey charger fled :
He burst through ranks of fighting men ;
He sprang o'er heaps of dead.

F

His bridle far out-streaming,
 His flanks all blood and foam,
 He sought the southern mountains,
 The mountains of his home.
 The pass was steep and rugged,
 The wolves they howled and whined ;
 But he ran like a whirlwind up the pass,
 And he left the wolves behind.
 Through many a startled hamlet
 Thundered his flying feet ;
 He rushed through the gate of Tusculum,
 He rushed up the long white street ;
 He rushed by tower and temple,
 And paused not from his race
 Till he stood before his master's door
 In the stately market-place.
 And straightway round him gathered
 A pale and trembling crowd,
 And when they knew him, cries of rage
 Brake forth, and wailing loud :
 And women rent their tresses
 For their great prince's fall ;
 And old men girt on their old swords,
 And went to man the wall.

LORD MACAULAY.

45.

The Soldier's Dream.

OUR bugles sang truce, for the night-cloud had lowered,
 And the sentinel stars set their watch in the sky ;
 And thousands had sunk on the ground overpowered,
 The weary to sleep, and the wounded to die.

When reposing that night on my pallet of straw
 The wolf-scaring faggot that guarded the slain,
 In the dead of the night a sweet vision I saw,
 Ere the morning I dreamt it again.
 From the battle-field's dreadful array,
 I had roamed on a desolate track :
 Moon and sunshine arose on the way
 Home of my fathers, that welcomed me back.

I flew to the pleasant fields traversed so oft
In life's morning march when my bosom was young;
I heard my own mountain-goats bleating aloft,
And knew the sweet strain that the corn-reapers sung.
Then pledged we the wine-cup, and fondly I swore
From my home and my weeping friends never to part;
My little ones kissed me a thousand times o'er,
And my wife sobbed aloud in her fulness of heart.
"Stay—stay with us!—rest!—thou art weary and worn!"—
And fain was their war-broken soldier to stay;—
But sorrow returned with the dawning of morn,
And the voice in my dreaming ear melted away.

T. CAMPBELL.

46.

Oliver Basselin.

IN the Valley of the Vire
Still is seen an ancient mill,
With its gables quaint and queer,
And beneath the window-sill,
On the stone,
These words alone :
"Oliver Basselin lived here."
Far above it, on the steep,
Ruined stands the old château,
Nothing but the donjon-keep
Left for shelter or for show.
Its vacant eyes
Stare at the skies,
Stare at the valley green and deep.
Once a convent, old and brown
Looked—but ah ! it looks no more,
From the neighbouring hillside down
On the rushing and the roar
Of the stream
Whose sunny gleam
Cheers the little Norman town.
In that darksome mill of stone,
To the water's dash and din,
Careless, humble, and unknown,
Sang the poet Basselin

Songs that fill
That ancient mill
With a splendour of its own.

Never feeling of unrest
Broke the pleasant dream he dreamed ;
Only made to be his nest,
All the lovely valley seemed ;
No desire
Of soaring higher
Stirred or fluttered in his breast.

True, his songs were not divine ;
Were not songs of that high art,
Which, as winds do in the pine,
Find an answer in each heart ;
But the mirth
Of this green earth
Laughed and revelled in his line.

From the alehouse and the inn,
Opening on the narrow street,
Came the loud convivial din,
Singing and applause of feet,
The laughing lays
That in those days
Sang the poet Basselin.

In the castle, cased in steel,
Knights, who fought at Agincourt,¹
Watched and waited, spur on heel ;
But the poet sang for sport
Songs that rang
Another clang,
Songs that lowlier hearts could feel.

In the convent, clad in gray,
Sat the monks in lonely cells,
Paced the cloisters, knelt to pray,
And the poet heard their bells ;
But his rhymes
Found other chimes,
Nearer to the earth than they.

¹ A battle, won by the English over the French in 1415.

Gone are all the barons bold,
Gone are all the knights and squires,
Gone the abbot, stern and cold,
And the brotherhood of friars ;
Not a name
Remains to fame,
From those mouldering days of old !
But the poet's memory here
Of the landscape makes a part ;
Like the river, swift and clear,
Flows his song through many a heart ;
Haunting still
That ancient mill,
In the Valley of the Vire.

H. W. LONGFELLOW.

47.

Remembrance of a Deed of Valour.

AND still his name sounds stirring
Unto the men of Rome,
As the trumpet blast that cries to them
To charge the Volscian home ;
And wives still pray to Juno
For boys with hearts as bold
As his who kept the bridge so well
In the brave days of old.
And in the nights of winter,
When the cold north winds blow,
And the long howling of the wolves
Is heard amidst the snow ;
When round the lonely cottage
Roars loud the tempest's din,
And the good logs of Algidus
Roar louder yet within ;
When the oldest cask is opened,
And the largest lamp is lit ;
When the chestnuts glow in the embers,
And the kid turns on the spit ;
When young and old in circle
Around the firebrands close ;
When the girls are weaving baskets,
And the lads are shaping bows ;

The image shows a highly degraded scan of a document page. It appears to contain a large, complex figure or diagram, possibly a map or a technical drawing, which is almost entirely illegible due to the extremely low contrast and noise. Some dark, irregular shapes are visible against the light background, suggesting the presence of graphical elements.

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...the Good News and

...the great place
 ...changing our place

I turned in my saddle and made its girths tight,
Then shortened each stirrup, and set the pique right,
Rebuckled the cheek-strap, chained slacker the bit,
Nor galloped less steadily Roland a whit.

'Twas moonset at starting; but while we drew near
Lokeren, the cocks crew and twilight dawned clear;
At Boom, a great yellow star came out to see;
At Düffeld, 'twas morning as plain as could be;
And from Mecheln church-steeple we heard the half-
chime,

So, Joris broke silence with, "Yet there is time!"

At Aershot, up leaped of a sudden the sun,
And against him the cattle stood black every one,
To stare thro' the mist at us galloping past,
And I saw my stout galloper Roland at last,
With resolute shoulders, each butting away
The haze, as some bluff river headland its spray:

And his low head and crest, just one sharp ear bent back
For my voice, and the other pricked out on his track;
And one eye's black intelligence,—ever that glance
O'er its white edge at me, his own master, askance!
And the thick heavy spume-flakes which aye and anon
His fierce lips shook upwards in galloping on.

By Hasselt, Dirck groaned; and cried Joris, "Stay spur!
Your Roos galloped bravely, the fault's not in her,
We'll remember at Aix"—for one heard the quick wheeze
Of her chest, saw the stretched neck and staggering knees,
And sunk tail, and horrible heave of the flank,
As down on her haunches she shuddered and sank.

So, we were left galloping, Joris and I,
Past Looz and past Tongres, no cloud in the sky;
The broad sun above laughed a pitiless laugh,
'Neath our feet broke the brittle bright stubble like chaff;
Till by Dalhem a dome-spire sprang white,
A "Hoop," gasped Joris, "for Aix is in sight!"

"They'll greet us!"—and all in a moment his roan
Crank and croup over, lay dead as a stone;
He was my Roland to bear the whole weight
Of the wheels which alone could save Aix from her fate,
His nostrils like pits full of blood to the brim,
His circles of red for his eye-sockets' rim.

Each holster let fall,
 Let go belt and all;
 He cried, patted his ear,
 "I have my horse, my horse without peer;
 He neighed and sang, any noise, bad or
 good."
 And Roland galloped and stood.

His friends flocking round
 He bent twixt my knees on the ground;
 And he was praising this Roland of mine,
 And down his throat our last measure of wine,
 The baronesses voted by common consent
 More noble than his due who brought good news from
 the front.

R. BROWNING.

50

A Noble Traitor.

A PERSIAN history

I read of late, how the great Sophy once
 Flying a noble falcon at the herse,
 In comes by chance an eagle sousing by:
 Which when the hawk espies, leaves her first game,
 And boldly ventures on the king of birds;
 Long tugged they in the air, till at the length
 The falcon better breathed, seized on the eagle,
 And struck it dead. The barons praised the bird,
 And for her courage she was peerless held.
 The emperor, after some deliberate thoughts,
 Made her no less; he caused a crown of gold
 To be new framed, and fitted to her head,
 In honour of her courage: then the bird
 With great applause, was to the market-place
 In triumph borne; where, when her utmost worth
 Had been proclaimed, the common executioner
 Knew, by the king's command, took off her crown,
 And after with a sword struck off her head,
 As one no better than a noble traitor
 Unto the king of birds.

T. HEYWOOD.

51.

Gathering Song of Donald the Black.

PIBROCH of Donuil Dhu,
Pibroch of Donuil,
Wake thy wild voice anew,
Summon Clan Conuil.
Come away, come away,
Hark to the summons !
Come in your war array,
Gentles and commons.
Come from deep glen, and
From mountains so rocky ;
The war-pipe and pennon
Are at Inverlocky.
Come every hill-plaid, and
True heart that wears one,
Come every steel blade, and
Strong hand that bears one.
Leave untended the herd,
The flock without shelter ;
Leave the corpse uninterred,
The bride at the altar ;
Leave the deer, leave the steer,
Leave nets and barges :
Come with your fighting-gear,
Broadswords and targes.
Come as the winds come, when
Forests are rended,
Come as the waves come, when
Navies are stranded :
Faster come, faster come,
Faster and faster,
Chief, vassal, page, and groom,
Tenant and master.
Fast they come, fast they come ;
See how they gather !
Wide waves the eagle plume
Blended with heather.
Cast your plaids, draw your blades,
Forward each man set !
Pibroch of Donuil Dhu
Knell for the onset !

SIR W. SCOTT.

Then I cast loose my buffcoat, each holster let fall,
 Shook off both my jack-boots, let go belt and all,
 Stood up in the stirrup, leaned, patted his ear,
 Called my Roland his pet-name, my horse without peer;
 Clapped my hands, laughed and sang, any noise, bad or
 good,
 Till at length into Aix Roland galloped and stood.

And all I remember is, friends flocking round
 As I sat with his head 'twixt my knees on the ground;
 And no voice but was praising this Roland of mine,
 As I poured down his throat our last measure of wine,
 Which (the burgesses voted by common consent)
 Was no more than his due who brought good news from
 Ghent.

R. BROWNING.

50.

A Noble Traitor.

A PERSIAN history

I read of late, how the great Sophy once
 Flying a noble falcon at the herne,
 In comes by chance an eagle sousing by:
 Which when the hawk espies, leaves her first game,
 And boldly ventures on the king of birds;
 Long tugged they in the air, till at the length
 The falcon (better breathed) seized on the eagle,
 And struck it dead. The barons praised the bird,
 And for her courage she was peerless held.
 The emperor, after some deliberate thoughts,
 Made her no less; he caused a crown of gold
 To be new framed, and fitted to her head,
 In honour of her courage: then the bird
 With great applause, was to the market-place
 In triumph borne; where, when her utmost worth
 Had been proclaimed, the common executioner
 First, by the king's command, took off her crown,
 And after with a sword struck off her head,
 As one no better than a noble traitor
 Unto the king of birds.

T. HEYWOOD.

53-

The Pilgrim.

WHO would true valour see,
Let him come hither ;
One here will constant be,
Come wind, come weather ;
There's no discouragement
Shall make him once relent
His first avowed intent
To be a pilgrim.

Who so beset him round
With dismal stories.
Do but themselves confound ;
His strength the more is.
No lion can him fright ;
He'll with a giant fight,
But he will have a right
To be a pilgrim.

Hobgoblin nor foul fiend
Can daunt his spirit ;
He knows he at the end
Shall life inherit.
Then fancies fly away,
He'll not fear what men say,
He'll labour night and day
To be a pilgrim.

J. BUNYAN

54-

After.

TAKE the cloak from his face, and at first
Let the corpse do its worst !
How he lies in his rights of a man !
Death has done all death can.
And, absorbed in the new life he leads,
He recks not, nor heeds
Nor his wrong nor my vengeance ; both strike
On his senses alike,
And are lost in the solemn and strange
Surprise of the change.

The Burial of Sir John Moore at Corunna.

Sir John Moore conducted an expedition, in the north of Spain, against Napoleon. He was killed at Corunna (1809) just at the moment of victory.

NOT a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
As his corpse to the rampart we hurried ;
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
O'er the grave where our hero we buried.

We buried him darkly at dead of night,
The sods with our bayonets turning,
By the struggling moonbeam's misty light,
And the lantern dimly burning.

No useless coffin enclosed his breast,
Not in sheet nor in shroud we wound him ;
But he lay like a warrior taking his rest,
With his martial cloak around him.

Few and short were the prayers we said,
And we spoke not a word of sorrow,
But we steadfastly gazed on the face that was dead,
And we bitterly thought of the morrow.

We thought as we hollowed his narrow bed,
And smoothed down his lonely pillow,
That the foe and the stranger would tread o'er his head,
And we far away on the billow !

Lightly they'll talk of the spirit that's gone,
And o'er his cold ashes upbraid him,—
But little he'll reck if they let him sleep on
In the grave where a Briton has laid him.

But half of our heavy task was done
When the clock struck the hour for retiring ;
And we heard the distant and random gun
That the foe was sullenly firing.

Slowly and sadly we laid him down,
From the field of his fame fresh and gory ;
We carved not a line, and we raised not a stone—
But we left him alone with his glory.

C. WOLFE.

53.

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And, absorbed in the new life he leads,
He recks not, nor heeds
Nor his wrong nor my vengeance ; both strike
On his senses alike,
And are lost in the solemn and strange
Surprise of the change.

Ha, what avails death to erase
 His offence, my disgrace?
 I would we were boys as of old
 In the field, by the fold:
 His outrage, God's patience, man's scorn
 Were so easily borne!

I stand here now, he lies in his place.
 Cover the face!

R. BROWNING.

55.

Happy Insensibility.

IN a drear-nighted December
 Too happy, happy tree
 Thy branches ne'er remember
 Their green felicity:
 The north cannot undo them
 With a sleety whistle through them,
 Nor frozen thawings glue them
 From budding at the prime.

In a drear-nighted December
 Too happy, happy brook
 Thy bubblings ne'er remember
 Apollo's summer look;
 But with a sweet forgetting
 They stay their crystal fretting,
 Never, never petting
 About the frozen time.

Ah would 'twere so with many
 A gentle girl and boy!
 But were there ever any
 Writhed not at passèd joy?
 To know the change and feel it,
 When there is none to heal it,
 Nor numbèd sense to steal it—
 Was never said in rhyme.

J. KEATS.

56.

Youth's Agitations.

WHEN I shall be divorced, some ten years hence,
From this poor present self which I am now;
When youth has done its tedious vain expense
Of passions that for ever ebb and flow;
Shall I not joy youth's heats are left behind,
And breathe more happy in an even clime?—
Ah no, for then I shall begin to find
A thousand virtues in this hated time!
Then I shall wish its agitations back,
And all its thwarting currents of desire;
Then I shall praise the heat which then I lack,
And call this hurrying fever, generous fire;
And sigh that one thing only has been lent
To youth and age in common—discontent.

M. ARNOLD.

57.

The Bridge of Sighs.

ONE more Unfortunate
Weary of breath
Rashly importunate,
Gone to her death !
Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care ;
Fashioned so slenderly,
Young, and so fair !
Look at her garments
Clinging like cerements ;
Whilst the wave constantly
Drips from her clothing ;
Take her up instantly,
Loving, not loathing.
Touch her not scornfully ;
Think of her mournfully,
Gently and humanly ;
Not of the stains of her—
All that remains of her
Now is pure womanly.

Make no deep scrutiny
Into her mutiny
Rash and undutiful :
Past all dishonour,
Death has left on her
Only the beautiful.
Still, for all slips of hers,
One of Eve's family—
Wipe those poor lips of hers
Oozing so clammy.
Loop up her tresses
Escaped from the comb,
Her fair auburn tresses !
Whilst wonderment guesses
Where was her home ?
Who was her father ?
Who was her mother ?
Had she a sister ?
Had she a brother ?
Or was there a dearer one
Still, and a nearer one
Yet, than all other ?
Alas ! for the rarity
Of Christian charity
Under the sun !
O ! it was pitiful !
Near a whole city full,
Home she had none.
Sisterly, brotherly,
Fatherly, motherly
Feelings had changed :
Love, by harsh evidence,
Thrown from its eminence ;
Even God's providence
Seeming estranged.
Where the lamps quiver
So far in the river,
With many a light
From window and casement,
From garret to basement,
She stood, with amazement,
Houseless by night.

The bleak wind of March
Made her tremble and shiver ;
But not the dark arch,
Or the black flowing river :
Mad from life's history,
Glad to death's mystery
Swift to be hurled—
Anywhere, anywhere
Out of the world !

In she plunged boldly,
No matter how coldly
The rough river ran,
Over the brink of it,—
Picture it, think of it,
Dissolute Man !
Lave in it, drink of it,
Then, if you can !

Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care ;
Fashioned so slenderly,
Young, and so fair !

Ere her limbs frigidly
Stiffen too rigidly,
Decently, kindly,
Smooth, and compose them ;
And her eyes, close them,
Staring so blindly !

Dreadfully staring
Through muddy impurity,
As when with the daring
Last look of despairing
Fixed on futurity.

Perishing gloomily,
Spurred by contumely
Cold inhumanity
Burning insanity
Into her rest.
Cross her hands humbly
As if praying dumbly,
Over her breast !

Owning her weakness,
Her evil behaviour,
And leaving, with meekness,
Her sins to her Saviour !

T. HOOD.

58.

Dirge.

WHERE shall we make her grave?
Oh ! where the wild-flowers wave
In the free air !
Where shower and singing-bird
'Midst the young leaves are heard—
There—lay her there !

Harsh was the world to her—
Now may sleep minister
Balm for each ill :
Low on sweet nature's breast,
Let the meek heart find rest,
Deep, deep and still !

Murmur, glad waters, by !
Faint gales, with happy sigh,
Come wandering o'er
That green and mossy bed,
Where, on a gentle head,
Storms beat no more !

What though for her in vain
Falls now the bright spring-rain,
Plays the soft wind ?
Yet still, from where she lies,
Should blessed breathings rise,
Gracious and kind.

Therefore let song and dew
Thence in the heart renew
Life's vernal glow !
And o'er that holy earth
Scents of the violet's birth
Still come and go !

Oh ! then where wild-flowers wave,
Make ye her mossy grave
In the free air !
Where shower and singing-bird
'Midst the young leaves are heard—
There, lay her there !

F. HEMANS.

59.

Ode to Autumn.

SEASON of mists and mellow fruitfulness !
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun ;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run ;
To bend with apples the mossed cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core ;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel ; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease ;
For Summer has o'erbrimmed their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store ?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind ;
Or on a half-reaped furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers ;
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook ;
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings, hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring ? Ay, where are they ?
Think not of them,—thou hast thy music too,
While barrèd clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue ;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river-sallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies ;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn ;

Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft,
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

J. KEATS.

60.

Autumn.

A DIRGE.

THE warm sun is failing, the bleak wind is wailing,
The bare boughs are sighing, the pale flowers are dying,
And the year
On the earth, her death-bed, in a shroud of leaves dead,
Is lying.

Come, months, come away,
From November to May,
In your saddest array;
Follow the bier
Of the dead cold year,

And like dim shadows watch by her sepulchre.

The chill rain is falling, the night-worm is crawling,
The rivers are swelling, the thunder is knelling
For the year;

The blithe swallows are flown, and the lizards each gone
To his dwelling;

Come, months, come away;
Put on white, black, and grey;
Let your light sisters play—
Ye, follow the bier
Of the dead cold year,

And make her grave green with tear on tear.

P. B. SHELLEY.

61.

THAT time of year thou mayst in me behold,
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold:
Bare, ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou seest the twilight of such day,
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by-and-by black night doth take away;
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.

In me thou seest the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourished by.
This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

W. SHAKESPEARE.

62.

WHY didst thou promise such a beauteous day,
And make me travel forth without my cloak,
To let base clouds o'ertake me in my way,
Hiding thy bravery in their rotten smoke?
'Tis not enough that through the cloud thou break,
To dry the rain on my storm-beaten face,
For no man well of such a salve can speak,
That heals the wound, and cures not the disgrace :
Nor can thy shame give physic to my grief ;
Though thou repent, yet I have still the loss :
The offender's sorrow lends but weak relief
To him that bears the strong offence's cross.
Ah ! but those tears are pearl which thy love sheds ;
And they are rich and ransom all ill deeds.

W. SHAKESPEARE.

63.

Frost at Midnight.

THE Frost performs its secret ministry,
Unhelped by any wind. The owl's cry
Came loud—and hark, again ! loud as before.
The inmates of my cottage, all at rest,
Have left me to that solitude, which suits
Abstruser musings : save that at my side
My cradled infant slumbers peacefully.
'Tis calm indeed ! so calm, that it disturbs
And vexes meditation with its strange
And extreme silentness. Sea, hill, and wood,
With all the numberless goings on of life,
Inaudible as dreams ! the thin blue flame
Lies on my low burnt fire, and quivers not ;
Only that film, which fluttered on the grate,
Still flutters there, the sole unquiet thing.

Methinks, its motion in this hush of nature
Gives it dim sympathies with me who live,
Making it a companionable form,
To which the living spirit in our frame,
That loves not to behold a lifeless thing,
Transfuses its own pleasures, its own will.

How oft, at school, with most believing mind,
Presageful, have I gazed upon the bars,
To watch that fluttering stranger! and as oft
With unclosed lids, already had I dreamt
Of my sweet birthplace, and the old church-tower,
Whose bells, the poor man's only music, rang
From morn to evening, all the hot fair-day,
So sweetly, that they stirred and haunted me
With a wild pleasure, falling on mine ear
Most like articulate sounds of things to come!
So gazed I, till the soothing things I dreamt,
Lulled me to sleep, and sleep prolonged my dreams!
And so I brooded all the following morn,
Awed by the stern preceptor's face, mine eye
Fixed with mock study on my swimming book:
Save if the door half opened, and I snatched
A hasty glance, and still my heart leaped up,
For still I hoped to see the stranger's face,
Townsmen, or aunt, or sister more beloved,
My playmate when we both were clothed alike!

Dear Babe, that sleepest cradled by my side,
Whose gentle breathings, heard in this deep calm,
Fill up the interspersed vacancies
And momentary pauses of the thought!
My babe so beautiful! it thrills my heart
With tender gladness, thus to look at thee,
And think that thou shalt learn far other lore
And in far other scenes! For I was reared
In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim,
And saw naught lovely but the sky and stars.
But thou, my babe! shalt wander like a breeze
By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags
Of ancient mountains, and beneath the clouds
Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores
And mountain crags: so shalt thou see and hear
The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible

Of that eternal language, which thy God
Utters, who from eternity doth teach
Himself in all, and all things in Himself.
Great universal Teacher ! He shall mould
Thy spirit, and by giving make it ask.

Therefore all seasons shall be sweet to thee,
Whether the summer clothe the general earth
With greenness, or the redbreast sit and sing
Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch
Of mossy apple-tree, while the nigh thatch
Smokes in the sun-thaw ; whether the eve-drops fall,
Heard only in the trances of the blast,
Or if the secret ministry of frost
Shall hang them up in silent icicles,
Quietly shining to the quiet moon.

S. T. COLERIDGE.

64.

THE world is too much with us ; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers :
Little we see in nature that is ours ;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon !
This sea that bares her bosom to the moon,
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers :—
For this, for everything, we are out of tune ;
It moves us not.—Great God ! I'd rather be
A Pagan, suckled in a creed outworn ;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn ;
Have sight of Proteus¹ rising from the sea ;
Or hear old Triton² blow his wreathèd horn.

W. WORDSWORTH.

65.

The Winter Walk at Noon.

THE night was winter in its roughest mood ;
The morning sharp and clear. But now at noon
Upon the southern side of the slant hills,
And where the woods fence off the northern blast,

¹ A sea-god.

² A sea-god, generally represented as blowing a shell.

The season smiles, resigning all its rage,
And has the warmth of May. The vault is blue
Without a cloud, and white without a speck
The dazzling splendour of the scene below.
Again the harmony comes o'er the vale;
And through the trees I view the embattled tower
Whence all the music. I again perceive
The soothing influence of the wafted strains,
And settle in soft musings as I tread
The walk, still verdant under oaks and elms,
Whose outspread branches overarch the glade.
The roof, though moveable through all its length
As the wind sways it, has yet well sufficed,
And, intercepting in their silent fall
The frequent flakes, has kept a path for me.
No noise is here, or none that hinders thought.
The redbreast warbles still, but is content
With slender notes and more than half suppressed :
Pleased with his solitude, and flitting light
From spray to spray, where'er he rests he shakes
From many a twig the pendent drops of ice,
That tinkle in the withered leaves below.
Stillness, accompanied with sounds so soft,
Charms more than silence. Meditation here
May think down hours to moments. Here the heart
May give a useful lesson to the head,
And Learning wiser grow without his books.
Knowledge and Wisdom, far from being one,
Have oftentimes no connexion. Knowledge dwells
In heads replete with thoughts of other men,
Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.
Knowledge, a rude unprofitable mass,
The mere materials with which wisdom builds,
Till smoothed and squared, and fitted to its place,
Does but encumber whom it seems to enrich.
Knowledge is proud that he has learned so much ;
Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.
Books are not seldom talismans and spells,
By which the magic art of shrewder wits
Holds an unthinking multitude enthralled.
Some to the fascination of a name
Surrender judgment hoodwinked. Some, the style
Infatuates, and through labyrinth and wilds

Of error leads them, by a tune entranced.
While sloth seduces more, too weak to bear
The insupportable fatigue of thought,
And swallowing therefore, without pause or choice,
The total grist unsifted, husks and all.
But trees, and rivulets whose rapid course
Defies the check of winter, haunts of deer,
And sheepwalks populous with bleating lambs,
And lanes in which the primrose ere her time
Peeps through the moss that clothes the hawthorn root,
Deceive no student. Wisdom there, and truth,
Not shy, as in the world, and to be won
By slow solicitation, seize at once
The roving thought, and fix it on themselves.

W. COWPER.

66.

The Sleep.

Of all the thoughts of God that are
Borne inward into souls afar,
Along the Psalmist's music deep,
Now tell me if that any is,
For gift or grace surpassing this—
"He giveth His beloved sleep"?

What would we give to our beloved?
The hero's heart to be unmoved,
The poet's star-tuned harp to sweep,
The patriot's voice to teach and rouse,
The monarch's crown to light the brows?—
He giveth His beloved sleep.

What do we give to our beloved?
A little faith all undisproved,
A little dust to overweep,
And bitter memories to make
The whole earth blasted for our sake :
He giveth His beloved sleep.

"Sleep soft, beloved!" we sometimes say,
Who have no tune to charm away
Sad dreams that through the eyelids creep :
But never doleful dream again
Shall break the happy slumber when
He giveth His beloved sleep.

O earth, so full of dreary noises !
O men, with wailing in your voices !
O delvèd gold, the wailer's heap !
O strife, O curse, that o'er it fall !
God strikes a silence through you all,
And giveth His belovèd sleep.

His dews drop mutely on the hill,
His cloud above it saileth still,
Though on its slope men sow and reap ;
More softly than the dew is shed,
Or cloud is floated overhead,
He giveth His belovèd sleep.

Ay, men may wonder while they scan
A living, thinking, feeling man
Confirmed in such a rest to keep ;
But angels say, and through the word
I think their happy smile is *heard*,
"He giveth his belovèd sleep."

For me, my heart that erst did go
Most like a tired child at a show,
That sees through tears the mummers leap,
Would now its wearied vision close,
Would childlike on His love repose
Who giveth His belovèd sleep.

And friends, dear friends, when shall it be
That this low breath is gone from me,
And round my bier ye come to weep,
Let One, most loving of you all,
Say, "Not a tear must o'er her fall !
He giveth His belovèd sleep."

E. B. BROWNING.

67.

To Night.

SWIFTLY walk over the western wave,
Spirit of Night !
Out of the misty eastern cave,
Where all the long and lone daylight,
Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear,
Which make thee terrible and dear,—
Swift be thy flight !

Wrap thy form in a mantle grey,
 Star-inwrought!
Blind with thine hair the eyes of Day:
Kiss her until she be wearied out,
Then wander o'er city, and sea, and land,
Touching all with thine opiate wand—
 Come, long-sought!

When I arose and saw the dawn
 I sighed for thee;
When light rode high, and the dew was gone,
And noon lay heavy on flower and tree,
And the weary day turned to his rest,
Lingering like an unloved guest,
 I sighed for thee.

Thy brother Death came, and cried,
 Wouldst thou me?
Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed,
 Murmured like a noontide bee,
Shall I nestle near thy side?
Wouldst thou me?—And I replied,
 No, not thee!

Death will come when thou art dead,
 Soon, too soon—
Sleep will come when thou art fled;
Of neither would I ask the boon
I ask of thee, beloved Night—
Swift be thine approaching flight,
 Come soon, soon!

P. B. SHELLEY.

68.

Thoughts of Death.

POOR slaves, how terrible this death is to them!—
If men would sleep, they would be wrath with all
That interrupt them; physic take, to take
The golden rest it brings; both pay and pray
For good and soundest naps, all friends consenting
In those invocations; praying all,
“Good rest the gods vouchsafe you!” But when Death,
Sleep's natural brother, comes; that's nothing worse,
But better (being more rich—and keeps the store—
Sleep ever fickle, wayward still, and poor);

O, how men grudge, and shake, and fear, and fly
 His stern approaches ! all their comforts, taken
 In faith, and knowledge of the bliss and beauties
 That watch their wakings in an endless life,
 Drowned in the pains and horrors of their sense
 Sustained but for an hour.

G. CHAPMAN.

69.

Hunting Song.

WAKEN, lords and ladies gay,
 On the mountain dawns the day ;
 All the jolly chase is here,
 With hawk and horse and hunting-spear ;
 Hounds are in their couples yelling,
 Hawks are whistling, horns are knelling,
 Merrily, merrily, mingle they,
 " Waken, lords and ladies gay."

Waken, lords and ladies gay,
 The mist has left the mountain gray,
 Springlets in the dawn are steaming,
 Diamonds on the brake are gleaming,
 And foresters have busy been
 To track the buck in thicket green ;
 Now we come to chant our lay,
 " Waken, lords and ladies gay."

Waken, lords and ladies gay,
 To the greenwood haste away ;
 We can show you where he lies,
 Fleet of foot and tall of size ;
 We can show the marks he made
 When 'gainst the oak his antlers frayed ;
 You shall see him brought to bay ;
 Waken, lords and ladies gay.

Louder, louder chant the lay,
 Waken, lords and ladies gay !
 Tell them youth and mirth and glee
 Run a course as well as we ;
 Time, stern huntsman ! who can baulk,
 Stanch as hound and fleet as hawk ;
 Think of this, and rise with day,
 Gentle lords and ladies gay !

SIR W. SCOTT.

70.

Hidden Forces.

Roderick Dhu, a Scottish chieftain, by a sudden signal, musters his warriors.

— He whistled shrill,
And he was answered from the hill ;
Wild as the scream of the curlew,
From crag to crag the signal flew.
Instant, through copse and heath, arose
Bonnets, and spears, and bended bows ;
On right, on left, above, below,
Sprung up at once the lurking foe ;
From shingles grey their lances start,
The bracken bush sends forth the dart,
The rushes and the willow wand
Are bristling into axe and brand ;
And every tuft of broom gives life
To plaided warrior armed for strife.
That whistle garrisoned the glen
At once with full five hundred men,
As if the yawning hill to heaven
A subterranean host had given.
Watching their leader's beck and will
All silent there they stood, and still.

* * * * *

Short space he stood—then waved his hand :
Down sunk the disappearing band ;
Each warrior vanished where he stood,
In broom or bracken, heath or wood ;
Sunk brand, and spear, and bended bow,
In osiers pale and copses low ;
It seemed as if their mother Earth
Had swallowed up her warlike birth.
The wind's last breath had tossed in air,
Pennon, and plaid, and plumage fair,—
The next but swept a lone hillside,
Where heath and fern were waving wide ;
The sun's last glance was glinted back,
From spear and glaive, from targe and jack,—
The next, all unreflected, shone
Or bracken green, and cold grey stone.

SIR W. SCOTT.

71.

Mazeppa.

Mazeppa, a Pole, having incurred the wrath of a noble of his own country, was bound to the back of a wild horse, and left to his fate. Carried into the wilderness, he was finally rescued by peasants, and restored to liberty. In this poem he is supposed, as an old man, to be relating this adventure of his youth.

AWAY, away, my steed and I,
Upon the pinions of the wind,
All human dwellings left behind ;
We sped like meteors through the sky,
When with its crackling sound the night
Is chequered with the northern light :
Town—village—none were on our track,
But a wild plain of far extent,
And bounded by a forest black:
And, save the scarce-seen battlement
On distant heights of some strong hold,
Against the Tartars built of old,
No trace of man. The year before
A Turkish army had marched o'er ;
And where the Spahi's hoof hath trod,
The verdure flies the bloody sod :—
The sky was dull, and dim, and gray,
And a low breeze crept moaning by—
I could have answered with a sigh—
But fast we fled, away, away—
And I could neither sigh nor pray ;
And my cold sweat-drops fell like rain
Upon the courser's bristling mane ;
But, snorting still with rage and fear,
He flew upon his far career :
At times I almost thought, indeed,
He must have slackened in his speed :
But no—my bound and slender frame
Was nothing to his angry might,
And merely like a spur became :
Each motion which I made to free
My swoln limbs from their agony
Increased his fury and affright :
I tried my voice,—'twas faint and low,
But yet he swerved as from a blow ;

And, starting to each accent, sprang
As from a sudden trumpet's clang :
Meantime my cords were wet with gore,
Which, oozing through my limbs, ran o'er ;
And in my tongue the thirst became
A something fierier far than flame.

* * * *

Up rose the sun ; the mists were curled
Back from the solitary world
Which lay around—behind—before ;
What booted it to traverse o'er
Plain, forest, river ? Man nor brute,
Nor dint of hoof, nor print of foot,
Lay in the wild luxuriant soil ;
No sign of travel—none of toil ;
The very air was mute ;
And not an insect's shrill small horn,
Nor matin bird's new voice was borne
From herb nor thicket. Many a werst,¹
Panting as if his heart would burst,
The weary brute still staggered on ;
And still we were—or seemed—alone :
At length, while reeling on our way,
Methought I heard a courser neigh,
From out yon tuft of blackening firs.
Is it the wind those branches stirs ?
No, no ! from out the forest prance
A trampling troop ; I see them come !
In one vast squadron they advance !
I strove to cry—my lips were dumb.
The steeds rush on in plunging pride :
But where are they the reins to guide ?
A thousand horse—and none to ride !
With flowing tail, and flying mane,
Wide nostrils—never stretched by pain,
Mouths bloodless to the bit or rein,
And feet that iron never shod,
And flanks unscarred by spur or rod,
A thousand horse, the wild, the free,
Like waves that follow o'er the sea,
Came thickly thundering on,

¹ A measure of distance.

As if our faint approach to meet ;
 The sight renerved my courser's feet,
 A moment staggering, feebly fleet,
 A moment, with a faint low neigh,
 He answered, and then fell ;
 With gasps and glazing eyes he lay,
 And reeking limbs immoveable,
 His first and last career is done !
 On came the troop—they saw him stoop,
 They saw me strangely bound along
 His back with many a bloody thong :
 They stop—they start—they snuff the air,
 Gallop a moment here and there,
 Approach, retire, wheel round and round,
 Then plunging back with sudden bound,
 Headed by one black mighty steed,
 Who seemed the patriarch of his breed,
 Without a single speck or hair
 Of white upon his shaggy hide ;
 They snort—they foam—neigh—swerve aside,
 And backward to the forest fly,
 By instinct, from a human eye.—
 They left me there, to my despair,
 Linked to the dead and stiffening wretch,
 Whose lifeless limbs beneath me stretch,
 Relieved from that unwonted weight,
 From whence I could not extricate
 Nor him nor me—and there we lay
 The dying on the dead !

* * * * *

The sun was sinking—still I lay
 Chained to the chill and stiffening steed ;
 I thought to mingle there our clay ;
 And my dim eyes of death had need,
 No hope arose of being freed :
 I cast my last looks up the sky,
 And there between me and the sun
 I saw the expecting raven fly,
 Who scarce would wait till both should die,
 Ere his repast begun ;
 He flew, and perched, then flew once more,
 And each time nearer than before ;

I saw his wing through twilight flit,
And once so near me he alit
I could have smote, but lacked the strength ;
But the slight motion of my hand,
And feeble scratching of the sand,
The exerted throat's faint struggling noise,
Which scarcely could be called a voice,
Together scared him off at length.
I know no more—my latest dream
Is something of a lovely star
Which fixed my dull eyes from afar,
And went and came with wandering beam,
And of the cold, dull, swimming, dense
Sensation of recurring sense,
And then subsiding back to death,
And then again a little breath,
A little thrill, a short suspense,
An icy sickness curdling o'er
My heart, and sparks that crossed my brain—
A gasp, a throb, a start of pain,
A sigh, and nothing more.

I woke—Where was I?—Do I see
A human face look down on me?
And doth a roof above me close?
Do these limbs on a couch repose?
Is this a chamber where I lie?
And is it mortal yon bright eye,
That watches me with gentle glance?
I closed my own again once more,
As doubtful that the former trance
Could not as yet be o'er.
A slender girl, long-haired, and tall,
Sate watching by the cottage wall ;
The sparkle of her eye I caught,
E'en with my first return of thought ;
For ever and anon she threw
A prying, pitying glance on me
With her black eyes so wild and free :
I gazed, and gazed, until I knew
No vision it could be,—
But that I lived, and was released
From adding to the vulture's feast.

LORD BYRON.

Summer Storm.

UNTREMULOUS in the river clear,
Towards the sky's image, hangs the imaged bridge ;
So still the air that I can hear
The slender clarion of the unseen midge ;
Out of the stillness, with a gathering creep,
Like rising wind in leaves, which now decreases,
Now lulls, now swells, and all the while increases,
The huddling trample of a drove of sheep
Tilts the loose planks, and then as gradually ceases
In dust on the other side ; life's emblem deep,
A confused noise between two silences,
Finding at last in dust precarious peace.
On the wide marsh the purple-blossomed grasses
Soak up the sunshine ; sleeps the brimming tide,
Save when the wedge-shaped wake in silence passes
Of some slow water-rat, whose sinuous glide
Wavers the long green sedge's shades from side to side ;
But up the west, like a rock-shivered surge,
Climbs a great cloud edged with sun-whitened spray ;
Huge whirls of foam boil toppling o'er its verge,
And falling still it seems, and yet it climbs away.

Suddenly all the sky is hid
As with the shutting of a lid,
One by one great drops are falling
Doubtful and slow,
Down the pane they are crookedly crawling,
And the wind breathes low ;
Slowly the circles widen on the river,
Widen and mingle, one and all ;
Here and there the slenderer flowers shiver,
Struck by an icy rain-drop's fall.

Now on the hills I hear the thunder mutter,
The wind is gathering in the west ;
The upturned leaves first whiten and flutter,
Then droop to a fitful rest ;
Up from the stream with sluggish flap
Struggles the gull and floats away ;
Nearer and nearer rolls the thunder-clap,—
We shall not see the sun go down to-day :

Now leaps the wind on the sleepy marsh,
And tramples the grass with terrified feet,
The startled river turns leaden and harsh.
You can hear the quick heart of the tempest beat.

Look ! look ! that vivid flash !
And instantly follows the rattling thunder,
As if some cloud crag, split asunder,
Fell, splintering with a ruinous crash,
On the earth, which crouches in silence under ;
And now a solid gray wall of rain
Shuts off the landscape, mile by mile ;
For a breath's space I see the blue wood again,
And, ere the next heart-beat, the wind-hurled pile,
That seemed but now a league aloof,
Bursts crackling o'er the sun-parched roof ;
Against the windows the storm comes dashing,
Through battered foliage the hail tears crashing,
The blue lightning flashes,
The rapid hail clashes,
The white waves are tumbling,
And, in one baffled roar,
Like the toothless sea mumbling
A rock-bristled shore.
The thunder is rumbling
And crashing and crumbling,—
Will silence return never more ?

Hush ! Still as death,
The tempest holds his breath
As from a sudden will ;
The rain stops short, but from the eaves
You see it drop, and hear it from the leaves,
All is so bodingly still ;
Again, now, now, again
Plashes the rain in heavy gout,
The crinkled lightning
Seems ever brightening,
And loud and long
Again the thunder shouts
His battle song,—
One quivering flash
One wildering crash,

Followed by silence dead and dull,
 As if the cloud, let go,
 Leapt bodily below
 To whelm the earth in one mad overthrow,
 And then a total lull.

Gone, gone, so soon !
 No more my half-crazed fancy there
 Can shape a giant in the air,
 No more I see his streaming hair,
 The writhing portent of his form ;—
 The pale and quiet moon
 Makes her calm forehead bare,
 And the last fragments of the storm,
 Like shattered rigging from a fight at sea,
 Silent and few, are drifting over me.

J. R. LOWELL.

73.

HERE unmolested, through whatever sign
 The sun proceeds, I wander ; neither mist,
 Nor freezing sky, nor sultry, checking me,
 Nor stranger intermeddling with my joy.
 Even in the spring and playtime of the year,
 That calls the unwonted villager abroad
 With all her little ones, a sportive train,
 To gather king-cups in the yellow mead,
 And prink their hair with daisies, or to pick
 A cheap but wholesome salad from the brook,
 These shades are all my own. The timorous hare,
 Grown so familiar with her frequent guest,
 Scarce shuns me ; and the stockdove unalarmed
 Sits cooing in the pine tree, nor suspends
 His long love-ditty for my near approach.
 Drawn from his refuge in some lonely elm,
 That age or injury has hollowed deep,
 Where, on his bed of wool and matted leaves,
 He has outslept the winter, ventures forth
 To frisk awhile, and bask in the warm sun,
 The squirrel, flippant, pert, and full of play :
 He sees me, and at once, swift as a bird,
 Ascends the neighbouring beech ; there whisks his brush,
 And perks his ears, and stamps, and cries aloud,

With all the prettiness of feigned alarm,
And anger insignificantly fierce.
The heart is hard in nature, and unfit
For human fellowship, as being void
Of sympathy, and therefore dead alike
To love and friendship both, that is not pleased
With sight of animals enjoying life,
Nor feels their happiness augment his own.

W. COWPER.

74.

To Meadows.

YE have been fresh and green,
Ye have been filled with flowers ;
And ye the walks have been
Where maids have spent their hours.

You have beheld how they
With wicker arks did come,
To kiss and bear away
The richer cowslips home,

You've heard them sweetly sing,
And seen them in a round ;
Each virgin, like a spring,
With honeysuckles crowned.

But now, we see none here,
Whose silvery feet did tread,
And with dishevelled hair
Adorned this smoother mead.

Like unthrifths, having spent
Your stock, and needy grown,
You're left here to lament
Your poor estates alone.

R. HERRICK.

75.

Life.

LIFE! I know not what thou art,
But know that thou and I must part
And when, or how, or where we met,
I own to me's a secret yet.

But this I know, when thou art fled,
 Where'er they lay these limbs, this head,
 No clod so valueless shall be,
 As all that then remains of me.
 O whither, whither dost thou fly,
 Where bend unseen thy trackless course,
 And in this strange divorce,
 Ah tell where I must seek this compound I?

To the vast ocean of empyreal flame,
 From whence thy essence came,
 Dost thou thy flight pursue, when freed
 From matter's base encumbering weed?
 Or dost thou, hid from sight,
 Wait, like some spell-bound knight,
 Through blank oblivious years th' appointed hour,
 To break thy trance and reassume thy power?
 Yet canst thou without thought or feeling be?
 O say what art thou, when no more thou'rt thee?

Life! we've been long together,
 Through pleasant and through cloudy weather;
 'Tis hard to part when friends are dear;
 Perhaps 'twill cost a sigh, a tear;
 Then steal away, give little warning,
 Choose thine own time;
 Say not good night, but in some brighter clime
 Bid me good morning.

A. L. BARBAULD.

76.

Mystery of Life and Death.

"MAN'S life is like a sparrow, mighty king!
 That, stealing in while by the fire you sit
 Housed with rejoicing friends, is seen to flit
 Safe from the storm, in comfort tarrying.
 Here did it enter—there, on hasty wing
 Flies out, and passes on from cold to cold;
 But whence it came we know not, nor behold
 Whither it goes. Even such that transient thing,

The human soul ; not utterly unknown
While in the body lodged, her warm abode ;
But from what world she came, what woe or weal
On her departure waits, no tongue hath shown ;
This mystery if the stranger can reveal,
His be a welcome cordially bestowed !”

W. WORDSWORTH.

77.

Dirge.

Die, die, ah die !
We all must die :
’Tis Fates’ decree :
Then ask not why.
When we were framed, the Fates consultedly
Did make this law, that all things born should die.
Yet Nature strove,
And did deny
We should be slaves
To Destiny.
At which, they heaped
Such misery,
That Nature’s self
Did wish to die,
And thank their goodness, that they would foresee
To end our cares with such a mild decree.

J. JONES.

78.

To be, or not to be.

Hamlet. To be, or not to be : that is the question :—
Whether ’tis nobler in the mind, to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And, by opposing, end them ?—To die—to sleep ;—
No more ; and, by a sleep, to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to,—’tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished. To die,—to sleep ;—
To sleep ! perchance to dream ;—ay, there’s the rub ;

For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
 When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
 Must give us pause. There's the respect
 That makes calamity of so long life ;
 For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
 The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
 The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
 The insolence of office, and the spurns
 That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
 When he himself might his quietus make
 With a bare bodkin ? who would fardels¹ bear,
 To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
 But that the dread of something after death,
 The undiscovered country, from whose bourn
 No traveller returns, puzzles the will,
 And makes us rather bear those ills we have,
 Than fly to others that we know not of ?
 Thus conscience does make cowards of us all ;
 And thus the native hue of resolution
 Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought ;
 And enterprises of great pith and moment,
 With this regard, their currents turn awry,
 And lose the name of action.

W. SHAKESPEARE.

79.

Madrigal.

THIS life, which seems so fair,
 Is like a bubble blown up in the air
 By sporting children's breath,
 Who chase it everywhere,
 And strive who can most motion it bequeath :
 And though it sometime seem of its own might,
 Like to an eye of gold, to be fixed there,
 And firm to hover in that empty height,
 That only is because it is so light.
 But in that pomp it doth not long appear ;
 For even when most admired, it, in a thought,
 As swelled from nothing does dissolve in nought.

W. DRUMMOND.

¹ Burdens.

80.

Human Frailty.

A GOOD that never satisfies the mind,
A beauty fading like the April flowers,
A sweet with floods of gall that runs combined,
A pleasure passing ere in thought made ours,
An honour that more fickle is than wind,
A glory at opinion's frown that lowers,
A treasury which bankrupt time devours,
A knowledge than grave ignorance more blind,
A vain delight our equals to command,
A style of greatness, in effect a dream,
A fabulous thought of holding sea and land,
A servile lot, decked with a pompous name,
Are the strange ends we toil for here below,
Till wisest death make us our errors know.

W. DRUMMOND.

81.

Hallowed Ground.

WHAT'S hallowed ground? Has earth a clod
Its Maker meant not should be trod
By man, the image of his God
Erect and free,
Unscourged by Superstition's rod
To bow the knee?

That's hallowed ground—where, mourned and missed,
The lips repose our love has kissed ;—
But where's their memory's mansion? Is't
Yon churchyard's bowers?
No ! in ourselves their souls exist,
A part of ours.

A kiss can consecrate the ground
Where mated hearts are mutual bound ;
The spot where love's first links were wound,
That ne'er are riven,
Is hallowed down to earth's profound,
And up to Heaven !

For time makes all but true love old ;
 The burning thoughts that then were told
 Run molten still in memory's mould ;
 And will not cool,
 Until the heart itself be cold
 In Lethe's¹ pool.

What hallows ground where heroes sleep ?
 'Tis not the sculptured piles you heap !
 In dews that heavens far distant weep
 Their turf may bloom ;
 Or Genii twine beneath the deep
 Their coral tomb.

But strew his ashes to the wind
 Whose sword or voice has served mankind—
 And is he dead, whose glorious mind
 Lifts thine on high?—
 To live in hearts we leave behind,
 Is not to die.

Is't death to fall for Freedom's right ?
 He's dead alone that lacks her light !
 And murder sullies in Heaven's sight,
 The sword he draws :—
 What can alone ennoble fight ?
 A noble cause !

Give that ! and welcome War to brace
 Her drums ! and rend Heaven's reeking space !
 The colours planted face to face,
 The charging cheer,
 Though Death's pale horse lead on the chase,
 Shall still be dear.

And place our trophies where men kneel
 To Heaven !—but Heaven rebukes my zeal !
 The cause of Truth and human weal,
 O God above !
 Transfer it from the sword's appeal
 To Peace and Love.

¹ A river of Hell. It made those who drank of its waters forget their past.

“ Far off from these, a slow and silent stream,
 Lethe, the river of oblivion, rolls
 Her watery labyrinth, whereof who drinks
 Forthwith his former state and being forgets—
 Forgets both joy and grief, pleasure and pain.”

Peace, Love ! the cherubim, that join
Their spread wings o'er Devotion's shrine,
Prayers sound in vain, and temples shine,
Where they are not—
The heart alone can make divine
Religion's spot.

To incantations dost thou trust,
And pompous rites in domes august ?
See mouldering stones and metal's rust
Belie the vaunt,
That men can bless one pile of dust
With chime or chaunt.

The ticking wood-worm mocks thee, man !
Thy temples,—creeds themselves grow wan !
But there's a dome of nobler span,
A temple given
Thy faith, that bigots dare not ban—
Its space is Heaven !

Its roof, star-pictured Nature's ceiling,
Where trancing the wrapt spirit's feeling,
And God himself to man revealing,
The harmonious spheres
Make music, though unheard their pealing
By mortal ears.

Fair stars ! are not your beings pure ?
Can sin, can death, your worlds obscure ?
Else why so swell the thoughts at your
Aspect above ?
Ye must be Heavens that make us sure
Of heavenly love !

And in your harmony sublime
I read the doom of distant time ;
That man's regenerate soul from crime
Shall yet be drawn,
And reason on his mortal clime
Immortal dawn.

What's hallowed ground ? 'Tis what gives birth
To sacred thoughts in souls of worth !—
Peace ! Independence ! Truth ! go forth
Earth's compass round ;
And your high priesthood shall make earth
All hallowed ground.

T. CAMPBELL.

82.

A Counsel.

“FOR this true nobleness I seek in vain,
 In woman and in man I find it not;
 I almost weary of my earthly lot,
 My life-springs are dried up with burning pain.”
 Thou find’st it not? I pray thee look again,
 Look *inward* through the depths of thine own soul.
 How is it with thee? Art thou sound and whole?
 Doth narrow search show thee no earthly stain?
 Be *noble*! And the nobleness that lies
 In other men, sleeping, but never dead
 Will rise in majesty to meet thine own;
 Then wilt thou see it gleam in many eyes,
 Then will pure light around thy path be shed,
 And thou wilt never more be sad and lone.

J. R. LOWELL.

83.

A Supplication for Guidance.

THE prayers I make will then be sweet indeed,
 If thou the spirit give by which I pray;
 My unassisted heart is barren clay,
 That of its native self can nothing feed.
 Of good and pious works Thou art the seed,
 That quickens only where Thou say’st it may.
 Unless Thou show to us Thine own true way,
 No man can find it; Father! Thou must lead.
 Do Thou, then, breathe such thoughts into my mind
 By which such virtue may in me be bred
 That in Thy holy footsteps I may tread;
 The fetters of my tongue do Thou unbind,
 That I may have the power to sing of Thee,
 And sound Thy praises everlastingly.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

(Translated by Wordsworth.)

84.

Sub Pondere Crescit.¹

THE hope of Truth grows stronger day by day ;
I hear the soul of man around me waking,
Like a great sea, its frozen fetters breaking,
And flinging up to heaven its sunlit spray,
Tossing huge continents in scornful play,
And crushing them, with din of grinding thunder,
That makes old emptinesses stare in wonder ;
The memory of a glory passed away
Lingers in every heart, as, in the shell,
Resounds the bygone freedom of the sea,
And, every hour new signs of promise tell
That the great soul shall once again be free,
For high, and yet more high, the murmurs swell
Of inward strife for truth and liberty.

J. R. LOWELL.

85.

Jephthah's Daughter.

"And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering. . . . And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances : and she was his only child ; beside her he had neither son nor daughter."

SINCE our Country, our God—Oh, my sire !
Demand that thy daughter expire ;
Since thy triumph was bought by thy vow—
Strike the bosom that's bared for thee now !
And the voice of my mourning is o'er,
And the mountains behold me no more :
If the hand that I love lay me low,
There cannot be pain in the blow !

And of this, oh, my father ! be sure—
That the blood of thy child is as pure
As the blessing I beg ere it flow,
And the last thought that soothes me below.

¹ Even beneath a weight it grows.

Though the virgins of Salem lament,
Be the judge and the hero unbent !
I have won the great battle for thee,
And my father and country are free !

When this blood of thy giving hath gushed,
When the voice that thou lovest is hushed,
Let my memory still be thy pride,
And forget not I smiled as I died !

LORD BYRON.

86.

The Soldier.

Now in myself I notice take
What life we soldiers lead,
My hair stands up, my heart doth ache,
My soul is full of dread ;
And to declare
This horrid fear,
Throughout my bones I feel
A shiv'ring cold
On me lay hold,
And run from head to heel.
It is not loss of limbs or breath
Which hath me so dismayed,
Nor mortal wounds, nor groans of death
Have made me thus arrayed :
When cannons roar,
I start no more
Than mountains from their place,
Nor feel I fears,
Though swords and spears
Are darted in my face.
A soldier it would ill become
Such common things to fear,
The shouts of war, the thund'ring drum,
His courage up doth cheer ;
Though dust and smoke
His passage choke,
He boldly marcheth on,
And thinketh scorn
His back to turn,
Till all be lost or won.

The flashing fires, the whizzing shot,
Distemper not his wits ;
The barbed steed he dreadeth not,
Nor him who thereon sits ;
But through the field,
With sword and shield,
He cutteth forth his way,
And through a flood
Of reeking blood
Wades on without dismay.

That whereupon the dread begins
Which thus appalleth me,
Is that huge troop of crying sins
Which rife in soldiers be ;
The wicked mind,
Wherewith I find
Into the field they go,
More terror hath
Than all the wrath
And engines of the foe.

Defend me, Lord ! from those misdeeds
Which my profession shame,
And from the vengeance that succeeds
When we are so to blame :
Preserve me far
From acts of war,
Where thou dost peace command ;
And in my breast
Let mercy rest,
Though justice use my hand.

Be thou my leader to the field,
My head in battle arm ;
Be thou a breastplate and a shield,
To keep my soul from harm ;
For live or die,
I will rely
On Thee, O Lord ! alone ;
And in this trust,
Though fall I must,
I cannot be undone.

G. WITHER.

87.

To Keep a True Lent.

"Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: . . . Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast? . . .

"Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

"Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? . . .

"And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon-day."

Is this a Fast, to keep
The larder lean?
And clean
From fat of veals, and sheep?

Is it to quit the dish
Of flesh, yet still
To fill
The platter high with fish?

Is it to fast an hour,
Or ragg'd to go,
Or show
A downcast look, and sour?

No: 'tis a Fast, to dole
Thy sheaf of wheat,
And meat,
Unto the hungry soul.

It is to fast from strife,
From old debate,
And hate;
To circumcise thy life.

To show a heart grief-rent;
To starve thy sin,
Not bin;
And that's to keep thy Lent.

R. HERRICK.

88.

The Noble Nature.

It is not growing like a tree
In bulk, doth make Man better be ;
Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,
To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sere :

A lily of a day
Is fairer far in May,
Although it fall and die that night—
It was the plant and flower of Light.
In small proportions we just beauties see ;
And in short measures life may perfect be.

B. JONSON.

89.

Virtue.

SWEET day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky !
The dew shall weep thy fall to-night ;
For thou must die.

Sweet rose, whose hue, angry and brave,
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye !
Thy root is ever in its grave—
And thou must die.

Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie !
My music shows ye have your closes,
And all must die.

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
Like seasoned timber, never gives ;
But, though the whole world turn to coal,
Then chiefly lives.

G. HERBERT.

90.

The Parrot.

THE deep affections of the breast,
That Heaven to living things imparts,
Are not exclusively possessed
By human hearts.

A Parrot, from the Spanish main,
Full young, and early caged, came o'er
With bright wings, to the bleak domain
Of Mulla's¹ shore.

To spicy groves, where he had won
His plumage of resplendent hue,
His native fruits, and skies, and sun,
He bade adieu.

For these he changed the smoke of turf,
A heathery land and misty sky,
And turned on rocks and raging surf
His golden eye.

But, petted, in our climate cold
He lived and chattered many a day ;
Until, with age, from green and gold
His wings grew grey.

At last, when blind and seeming dumb,
He scolded, laughed, and spoke no more,
A Spanish stranger chanced to come
To Mulla's shore ;

He hailed the bird in Spanish speech ;
The bird in Spanish speech replied,
Flapped round his cage with joyous screech,
Dropt down, and died.

T. CAMPBELL.

91.

Coronach.

HE is gone on the mountain,
He is lost to the forest,
Like a summer-dried fountain,
When our need was the sorest.
The fount, reappearing,
From the raindrops shall borrow,
But to us comes no cheering,
To Duncan no morrow !

¹ The island of Mull, off the west coast of Scotland.

The hand of the reaper
Takes the ears that are hoary,
But the voice of the weeper
Wails manhood in glory.
The autumn winds rushing
Waft the leaves that are serest,
But our flower was in flushing
When blighting was nearest.
Fleet foot on the correi,¹
Sage counsel in cumber,²
Red hand in the foray,
How sound is thy slumber !
Like the dew on the mountain,
Like the foam on the river,
Like the bubble on the fountain,
Thou art gone, and for ever !

SIR W. SCOTT.

92.

"And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand : and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses."

The Destruction of Sennacherib, King of Assyria.

THE Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold ;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen ;
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed ;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew still !

And there lay the steed, with his nostril all wide,
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride :
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

¹ Covert on a hillside.

² Trouble.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
 With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail ;
 And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
 The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
 And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal ;
 And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
 Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord !

LORD BYRON.

93.

Laodamia.

Laodamia's husband, Protesilaus, was one of the Greeks who went to fight in the war of Troy. He was the first to set foot on the Trojan shore, and, as such, being doomed by the oracle to die, was killed by Hector

"WITH sacrifice before the rising morn
 Vows have I made by fruitless hope inspired ;
 And from the infernal gods, mid shades forlorn,
 Of night, my slaughtered lord have I required :
 Celestial pity I again implore ;—
 Restore him to my sight—great Jove, restore !"

So speaking, and by fervent love endowed
 With faith, the suppliant heavenward lifts her hands ;
 While, like the sun emerging from a cloud,
 Her countenance brightens—and her eye expands ;
 Her bosom heaves and spreads, her stature grows ;
 And she expects the issue in repose.

O terror ! what hath she perceived ?—O joy !
 What doth she look on ?—whom doth she behold ?
 Her hero slain upon the beach of Troy ?
 His vital presence—his corporeal mould ?
 It is—if sense deceive her not—'tis he !
 And a god leads him—wingèd Mercury !¹

Mild Hermes spake, and touched her with his wand
 That calms all fear : "Such grace hath crowned thy prayer,
 Laodamia ! that at Jove's command
 Thy husband walks the paths of upper air :
 He comes to tarry with thee three hours' space ;
 Accept the gift—behold him face to face !"

¹ Mercury, or Hermes, was the messenger of the gods, and is generally represented with winged feet.

Forth sprang the impassioned queen her lord to clasp ;
Again that consummation she essayed ;
But unsubstantial form eludes her grasp
As often as that eager grasp was made.
The phantom parts—but parts to re-unite,
And re-assume his place before her sight.

“Protesilaus, lo ! thy guide is gone !
Confirm, I pray, the vision with thy voice :
This is our palace,—yonder is thy throne ;
Speak, and the floor thou tread'st on will rejoice.
Not to appal me have the gods bestowed
This precious boon,—and blest a sad abode.”

“Great Jove, Laodamia ! doth not leave
His gifts imperfect :—Spectre though I be,
I am not sent to scare thee or deceive ;
But in reward of thy fidelity.
And something also did my worth obtain ;
For fearless virtue bringeth boundless gain.

“Thou know'st, the Delphic¹ oracle foretold
That the first Greek who touched the Trojan strand
Should die ; but me the threat could not withhold :
A generous cause a victim did demand ;
And forth I leapt upon the sandy plain ;
A self-devoted chief—by Hector slain.”

“Supreme of heroes—bravest, noblest, best !
Thy matchless courage I bewail no more,
Which then, when tens of thousands were deprest
By doubt, propelled thee to the fatal shore ;
Thou found'st—and I forgive thee—here thou art—
A nobler counsellor than my poor heart.

“But thou, though capable of sternest deed,
Wert kind as resolute, and good as brave ;
And he, whose power restores thee, hath decreed
That thou shouldst cheat the malice of the grave ;
Redundant are thy locks, thy lips as fair
As when their breath enriched Thessalian air.

¹ In the temple dedicated to Apollo at Delphi, in the north of Greece, the god was supposed to give answers to questions that were put to him. These pretended answers were called oracles.

"No spectre greets me,—no vain shadow this :
Come, blooming hero, place thee by my side !
Give, on this well-known couch, one nuptial kiss
To me, this day a second time thy bride !"
Jove frowned in heaven : the conscious Parcae¹ threw
Upon those roseate lips a Stygian hue.

"This visage tells thee that my doom is past :
Know, virtue were not virtue if the joys
Of sense were able to return as fast
And surely as they vanish.—Earth destroys
Those raptures duly—Erebus² disdains :
Calm pleasures there abide—majestic pains.

"Be taught, O faithful consort, to control
Rebellious passion : for the gods approve
The depth, and not the tumult, of the soul ;
A fervent, not ungovernable, love.
Thy transports moderate ; and meekly mourn
When I depart, for brief is my sojourn——"

"Ah, wherefore ?—Did not Hercules by force
Wrest from the guardian monster of the tomb
Alcestis,³ a reanimated corse
Given back to dwell on earth in vernal bloom ?
Medea's⁴ spells dispersed the weight of years,
And Æson stood a youth 'mid youthful peers.

"The gods to us are merciful—and they
Yet further may relent : for mightier far
Than strength of nerve and sinew, or the sway
Of magic, potent over sun and star,
Is love, though oft to agony distrest,
And though his favourite seat be feeble woman's breast.

"But if thou go'st, I follow——" "Peace !" he said—
She looked upon him and was calmed and cheered ;
The ghastly colour from his lips had fled ;
In his deportment, shape, and mien, appeared

¹ Three goddesses who presided over the life of mankind. Clotho, the youngest, supreme at the moment of birth, held a distaff in her hand ; Lachesis spun the events of life ; Atropos cut its thread with her scissors.

² A deity of Hell. The word is also used to mean Hell itself, more often that part of it in which dwelt the souls of the virtuous.

³ Alcestis sacrificed her own life to save that of her husband. Hercules, it is told, rescued her from the Infernal Regions.

⁴ Medea, a magician, restored youth to Æson (the father of her husband, Jason) by mixing with his blood the juice of certain herbs.

Elysian beauty, melancholy grace,
Brought from a pensive, though a happy place.

He spake of love, such love as spirits feel
In worlds whose course is equable and pure ;
No fears to beat away—no strife to heal—
The past unsighed for, and the future sure ;
Spake of heroic arts in graver mood
Revived, with finer harmony pursued ;

Of all that is most beautiful—imaged there
In happier beauty ; more pellucid streams,
An ampler ether, a diviner air,
And fields invested with purpureal gleams ;
Climes which the sun, who sheds the brightest day
Earth knows, is all unworthy to survey.

Yet there the soul shall enter which hath earned
That privilege by virtue.—“ Ill,” said he,
“ The end of man’s existence I discerned,
Who from ignoble games and revelry
Could draw, when we had parted, vain delight
While tears were thy best pastime,—day and night :

“ And while my youthful peers, before my eyes
(Each hero following his peculiar bent)
Prepared themselves for glorious enterprise
By martial sports,—or, seated in the tent,
Chieftains and kings in council were detained ;
What time the fleet at Aulis¹ lay enchained.

“ The wished-for wind was given :—I then revolved
The oracle, upon the silent sea ;
And, if no worthier led the way, resolved
That, of a thousand vessels, mine should be
The foremost prow in pressing to the strand,
Mine the first blood that tinged the Trojan sand.

“ Yet bitter, oftentimes bitter, was the pang
When of thy loss I thought, beloved wife !
On thee too fondly did my memory hang,
And on the joys we shared in mortal life,—
The paths which we had trod—these fountains—flowers ;
My new-planned cities, and unfinished towers.

¹ Owing to the displeasure of the goddess Diana, the Greek fleet had been kept from starting for Troy by contrary winds.

"But should suspense permit the foe to cry,
 'Behold, they tremble!—haughty their array,
 Yet of their number no one dares to die?'
 In soul I swept the indignity away :
 Old frailties then recurred :—but lofty thought,
 In act embodied, my deliverance wrought.

"And thou, though strong in love, art all too weak
 In reason, in self-government too slow ;
 I counsel thee by fortitude to seek
 Our blest re-union in the shades below.
 The invisible world with thee hath sympathized ;
 Be thy affections raised and solemnized.

"Learn by a mortal yearning to ascend
 Towards a higher object.—Love was given,
 Encouraged, sanctioned, chiefly for that end :
 For this the passion to excess was driven—
 That self might be annulled ; her bondage prove
 The fetters of a dream, opposed to love."

Aloud she shrieked ! for Hermes reappears !
 Round the dear shade she would have clung—'tis vain :
 The hours are past—too brief had they been years ;
 And him no mortal effort can detain :
 Swift, toward the realms that know not earthly day,
 He through the portal takes his silent way,
 And on the palace floor a lifeless corse she lay.

By no weak pity might the gods be moved ;
 She who thus perished not without the crime
 Of lovers that in reason's spite have loved,
 Was doomed to wander in a grosser clime,
 Apart from happy ghosts—that gather flowers
 Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers.

Yet tears to human suffering are due ;
 And mortal hopes defeated and o'erthrown
 Are mourned by man, and not by man alone,
 As fondly he believes.—Upon the side
 Of Hellespont¹ (such faith was entertained)
 A knot of spiry trees for ages grew
 Out the tomb of him for whom she died ;

¹ A narrow strait between Asia and Europe.

And ever, when such stature they had gained
That Ilium's walls were subject to their view,
The trees' tall summits withered at the sight ;
A constant interchange of growth and blight !

W. WORDSWORTH.

94.

Ode to Duty.

STERN daughter of the voice of God !
O Duty ! if that name thou love
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove ;
Thou who art victory and law
When empty terrors overawe ;
From vain temptations dost set free ;
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity.

There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them ; who, in love and truth,
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth :
Glad hearts ! without reproach or blot ;
Who do thy work, and know it not !
Long may the kindly impulse last !
But thou, if they should totter, teach them to stand fast !

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security.
And they a blissful course may hold
Even now, who, not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed ;
Yet find that other strength, according to their need.

I, loving freedom, and untried ;
No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide,
Too blindly have reposed my trust ;
And oft, when in my heart was heard
Thy timely mandate, I deferred
The task, in smoother walks to stray ;
But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may.

Through no disturbance of my soul,
Or strong compunction in me wrought,
I supplicate for thy control ;
But in the quietness of thought :
Me this unchartered freedom tires ;
I feel the weight of chance desires :
My hopes no more must change their name,
I long for a repose that ever is the same.

Stern lawgiver ! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace ;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face :
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds ;
And fragrance in thy footing treads ;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong ;
And the most ancient heavens, through thee, are fresh
and strong.

To humbler functions, awful power !
I call thee : I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour ;
Oh, let my weakness have an end !
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice ;
The confidence of reason give ;
And, in the light of truth, thy bondman, let me live !

W. WORDSWORTH.

95.

The Fairies.

If ye will with Mab find grace,
Set each platter in his place ;
Rake the fire up, and get
Water in, ere sun be set.
Wash your pails and cleanse your dairies,
Sluts are loathsome to the fairies ;
Sweep your house ; who doth not so,
Mab will pinch her by the toe.

R. HERRICK.

96.

The Bag of the Bee.

ABOUT the sweet bag of a bee
Two Cupids fell at odds ;
And whose the pretty prize should be
They vowed to ask the gods.
Which Venus hearing, thither came,
And for their boldness stript them ;
And taking thence from each his flame,
With rods of myrtle whipt them.
Which done, to still their wanton cries,
When quiet grown she'd seen them,
She kissed and wiped their dove-like eyes,
And gave the bag between them.

R. HERRICK.

97.

The Message.

SEND home my long-strayed eyes to me,
Which, oh ! too long have dwelt on thee ;
But if they there have learned such ill,
Such forced fashions
And false passions,
That they be
Made by thee
Fit for no good sight, keep them still.
Send home my harmless heart again,
Which no unworthy thought could stain ;
But if it be taught by thine
To make jestings
Of protestings,
And break both
Word and oath,
Keep it still, 'tis none of mine.
Yet send me back my heart and eyes,
That I may know and see thy lies,
And may laugh and joy when thou
Art in anguish,
And dost languish
For some one
That will none,
Or prove as false as thou dost now.

J. DONNE.

A Cruel Mistress.

We read of kings and gods that kindly took
 A pitcher filled with water from the brook :
 But I have daily rendered without thanks
 Rivers of tears that overflow their banks.
 A slaughtered bull will appease angry Jove :
 A horse, the Sun, a lamb, the god of Love :
 But she disdains the spotless sacrifice
 Of a pure heart, that in her altar lies.
 Vesta is not displeased, if her choice are
 Do with regard that ever turn :
 But my Saint frowns, though to her honoured name
 I consecrate a never-dying flame.
 The Assyrian king did none of this furnace throw
 But those that to his image did not bow :
 With bended knees I daily worship her,
 Yet she consumes her own idolater.
 Of such a goddess no times leave record,
 That burnt the temple where she was adored.

T. CAREW.

The Message of the Rose.

Go, lovely rose !
 Tell her that wastes her time and me,
 That now she knows
 When I resemble her to thee
 How sweet and fair she seems to be.

Tell her that's young,
 And shuns to have her graces spied,
 That hadst thou sprung
 In deserts, where no men abide,
 Thou must have uncommended died.

Small is the worth
 Of beauty from the light retired ;
 Bid her come forth,
 Suffer herself to be desired,
 And not blush so to be admired.

¹ Nebuchadnezzar ordered that all those who refused to fall down and worship the golden image he had made should be cast into a fiery furnace.

Then die, that she
The common fate of all things rare
May read in thee :
How small a part of time they share,
That are so wondrous sweet and fair.

E. WALLER.

100.

The Power of Love.

A LOVER'S eyes will gaze an eagle blind ;
A lover's ear will hear the lowest sound,
When the suspicious head of theft is stopped :
Love's feeling is more soft and sensible
Than are the tender horns of cockled snails ;
Love's tongue proves dainty Bacchus gross in taste :
For valour, is not Love a Hercules,¹
Still climbing trees in the Hesperides?²
Subtle as Sphinx ;³ as sweet and musical
As bright Apollo's⁴ lute, strung with his hair ;
And, when Love speaks, the voice of all the gods
Make heaven drowsy with the harmony.
Never durst poet touch a pen to write,
Until his ink were tempered with Love's sighs ;
O, then his lines would ravish savage ears,
And plant in tyrants mild humility.
From women's eyes this doctrine I derive :
They sparkle still the right Promethean⁵ fire ;
They are the books, the arts, the academes,
That show, contain, and nourish all the world.

W. SHAKESPEARE.

¹ A great hero, who ranked, after death, among the Greek gods. He is chiefly famous for a series of wonderful exploits, known as the twelve labours of Hercules.

² A garden in which golden apples grew. One of Hercules' labours was to procure some of these apples, which were guarded by a dragon.

³ A monster, with the head of a woman, and human voice, the tail of a serpent, the body of a dog, the wings of a bird, and the paws of a lion. It kept the surrounding country in alarm by proposing strange riddles, and devouring people who could not explain them.

⁴ The god of the fine arts.

⁵ Prometheus was said to have stolen fire from the chariot of the sun, and restored it to the earth ; Jupiter, the king of the gods, having taken it away in a fit of anger.

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Love not to be Restrained.

Julia's lover, Proteus, has gone from Verona to Milan. She determines to follow him.

Enter JULIA and LUCETTA.

Jul. Counsel, Lucetta; gentle girl, assist me!
And, even in kind love, I do conjure thee,—
Who art the table wherein all my thoughts
Are visibly charactered and engraved,—
To lesson me, and tell me some good mean,
How, with my honour, I may undertake
A journey to my loving Proteus.

Luc. Alas! the way is wearisome and long.

Jul. A true-devoted pilgrim is not weary
To measure kingdoms with his feeble steps;
Much less shall she, that hath Love's wings to fly;
And when the flight is made to one so dear,
Of such divine perfection as Sir Proteus.

Luc. Better forbear, till Proteus make return.

Jul. O, knowest thou not, his looks are my soul's food?
Pity the dearth that I have pinèd in,
By longing for that food so long a time.
Didst thou but know the inly touch of love,
Thou wouldst as soon go kindle fire with snow
As seek to quench the fire of love with words.

Luc. I do not seek to quench your love's hot fire,
But qualify the fire's extreme rage,
Lest it should burn above the bounds of reason.

Jul. The more thou damm'st it up, the more it burns;
The current, that with gentle murmur glides,
Thou knowest, being stopped, impatiently doth rage;
But, when his fair course is not hinderèd,
He makes sweet music with the enamellèd stones,
Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge
He overtaketh in his pilgrimage;
And so by many winding nooks he strays,
With willing sport to the wild ocean.
Then let me go, and hinder not my course:
I'll be as patient as a gentle stream,
And make a pastime of each weary step,
Till the last step have brought me to my love;

And there I'll rest, as after much turmoil
A blessed soul doth in Elysium.¹

W. SHAKESPEARE.

104.

So is it not with me as with that muse,
Stirred by a painted beauty to his verse ;
Who heaven itself for ornament doth use,
And every fair with his fair doth rehearse ;
Making a couplement of proud compare,
With sun and moon, with earth and sea's rich gems,
With April's first-born flowers, and all things rare
That heaven's air in this huge rondure hems.
O, let me, true in love, but truly write,
And then believe me, my love is as fair
As any mother's child, though not so bright
As those gold candles fixed in heaven's air.

Let them say more that like of hearsay well :
I will not praise, that purpose not to sell.

W. SHAKESPEARE.

105.

A Boundless Love.

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of everyday's
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right ;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints,—I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life!—and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

E. B. BROWNING. (From the Portuguese.)

¹ A place in the infernal regions where the souls of the virtuous were supposed to dwell in complete happiness after death.

Lamentation.

SITH gone is my delight and only pleasure,
 The last of all my hopes, the cheerful sun
 That cleared my life's dark day, Nature's sweet treasure,
 More dear to me than all beneath the moon,
 What resteth now, but that upon this mountain
 I weep, till Heaven transform me in a fountain?

Fresh, fair, delicious, crystal, pearly fountain,
 On whose smooth face she oft took pleasure,
 Tell me (so may thy streams long cheer this mountain,
 So serpent ne'er thee stain, nor scorch thee sun,
 So may with gentle beams thee kiss the moon),
 Dost thou not mourn to want so fair a treasure?

While she her glassed in thee, rich Tagus'¹ treasure
 Thou envy needed not, nor yet the fountain
 In which that hunter saw the naked moon;
 Absence has robbed thee of thy wealth and pleasure,
 And I remain like marigold of sun
 Deprived, that dies by shadow of some mountain.

Nymphs of the forests, nymphs who on this mountain
 Are wont to dance, showing your beauty's treasure
 To goat-feet sylvans, and the wond'ring sun,
 When as you gather flowers about this fountain,
 Bid her farewell who placèd here her pleasure,
 And sing her praises to the stars and moon.

Among the lesser lights as is the moon,
 Blushing through scarf of clouds on Latmos'² mountain,
 Or when her silver locks she laves for pleasure
 In Thetis'³ streams, proud of so gay a treasure,
 Such was my fair when she sat by this fountain
 With other nymphs, to shun the amorous sun.

As is our earth in absence of the sun,
 Or when of sun deprived is the moon,
 As is without a verdant shade a fountain,
 Or wanting grass, a mead, a vale, a mountain;

¹ A river of Spain, whose sands, according to the poets, were covered with gold.

² A mountain of Asia Minor, famous as the residence of the shepherd Endymion, with whom Diana, the goddess of the moon, fell in love.

³ A sea-goddess.

Such is my state, bereft of my dear treasure,
To know whose only worth was all my pleasure.

Ne'er think of pleasure, heart ; eyes, shun the sun,
Tears be your treasure, which the wand'ring moon
Shall see you shed by mountain, vale, and fountain.
W. DRUMMOND.

107.

A Sorrowful Life and too Early Death.

My prime of youth is but a frost of cares ;
My feast of joy is but a dish of pain ;
My crop of corn is but a field of tares,
And all my good is but vain hope of gain.
The day is fled, and yet I saw no sun,
And now I live, and now my life is done !

My spring is past, and yet it hath not sprung ;
The fruit is dead, and yet the leaves are green ;
My youth is past, and yet I am but young ;
I saw the world, and yet I was not seen ;
My thread is cut, and yet 'tis hardly spun ;
And now I live, and now my life is done !

I sought for death and found it in the womb,
I looked for life, and yet it was a shade,
I trod the ground and knew it was my tomb,
And now I die, and now I am but made ;
The glass is full, and yet my glass is run ;
And now I live, and now my life is done.
CHIDIOCK TICHBORNE.

108.

Stanzas to Augusta.

THOUGH the day of my destiny's over,
And the star of my fate hath declined,
Thy soft heart refused to discover
The faults which so many could find ;
Though thy soul with my grief was acquainted
It shrunk not to share it with me,
And the love which my spirit hath painted,
It never hath found but in *thee*.

Then when nature around me is smiling,
 The last smile which answers to mine,
 I do not believe it beguiling,
 Because it reminds me of thine;
 And when winds are at war with the ocean,
 As the breasts I believed in with me,
 If their billows excite an emotion,
 It is that they bear me from *thee*.

Though the rock of my last hope is shivered,
 And its fragments are sunk in the wave,
 Though I feel that my soul is delivered
 To pain—it shall not be its slave.
 There is many a pang to pursue me:
 They may crush, but they shall not contemn—
 They may torture, but shall not subdue me—
 'Tis of *thee* that I think—not of them.

Though human, thou didst not deceive me,
 Though woman, thou didst not forsake,
 Though loved, thou forbores to grieve me,
 Though slandered, thou never couldst shake,
 Though trusted, thou didst not disclaim me;
 Though parted, it was not to fly,
 Though watchful, 'twas not to defame me,
 Nor, mute, that the world might belie.

Yet I blame not the world, nor despise it,
 Nor the war of the many with one—
 If my soul was not fitted to prize it,
 'Twas folly not sooner to shun:
 And if dearly that error hath cost me,
 And more than I once could foresee,
 I have found that, whatever it lost me,
 It could not deprive me of *thee*.

From the wreck of the past, which hath perished,
 Thus much I at least may recall,
 It hath taught me that what I most cherished
 Deserved to be dearest of all:
 In the desert a fountain is springing,
 In the wide waste there still is a tree,
 And a bird in the solitude singing,
 Which speaks to my spirit of *thee*.

LORD BYRON.

109.

To Sophia.

THOU art fair, and few are fairer,
Of the nymphs of earth or ocean.
They are robes that fit the wearer—
Those soft limbs of thine, whose motion
Ever falls and shifts and glances,
As the life within them dances.

Thy deep eyes, a double planet,
Gaze the wisest into madness
With soft clear fire. The winds that fan it
Are those thoughts of gentle gladness
Which, like zephyrs on the billow,
Make thy gentle soul their pillow.

If whatever face thou paintest
In those eyes grows pale with pleasure,
If the fainting soul is faintest
When it hears thy harp's wild measure,
Wonder not that, when thou speakest,
Of the weak my heart is weakest.

As dew beneath the wind of morning,
As the sea which whirlwinds waken,
As the birds at thunder's warning,
As aught mute but deeply shaken,
As one who feels an unseen spirit,
Is my heart when thine is near it.

P. B. SHELLEY.

110.

SHE walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies,
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meets in her aspect and her eyes,
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less
Had half impaired the nameless grace

Which waves in every raven tress,
 Or softly lightens o'er her face,
 Where thoughts serenely sweet express
 How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow
 So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
 The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
 But tell of days in goodness spent,—
 A mind at peace with all below,
 A heart whose love is innocent.

LORD BYRON.

III.

Hester.

WHEN maidens such as Hester die
 Their place ye may not well supply,
 Though ye among a thousand try
 With vain endeavour.
 A month or more hath she been dead,
 Yet cannot I by force be led
 To think upon the wormy bed
 And her together.

A springy motion in her gait,
 A rising step, did indicate
 Of pride and joy no common rate
 That flushed her spirit :
 I know not by what name beside
 I shall it call : if 'twas not pride,
 It was a joy to that allied
 She did inherit.

Her parents held the Quaker rule
 Which doth the human feeling cool ;
 But she was trained in Nature's school,
 Nature had blest her.
 A waking eye, a prying mind,
 A heart that stirs, is hard to bind ;
 A hawk's keen sight ye cannot blind,
 Ye could not Hester.

My sprightly neighbour! gone before
To that unknown and silent shore,
Shall we not meet as heretofore
 Some summer morning—
When from thy cheerful eyes a ray
Hath struck a bliss upon the day,
A bliss that would not go away,
 A sweet fore-warning?

C. LAMB.

112.

A Perfect Woman.

SHE was a phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight ;
A lovely apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament ;
Her eyes as stars of twilight fair ;
Like twilight's, too, her dusky hair ;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful dawn ;
A dancing shape, an image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and waylay.
I saw her upon nearer view,
A spirit, yet a woman too !
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin-liberty ;
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet ;
A creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food,
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.
And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine ;
A being breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveller between life and death :
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill ;
A perfect woman, nobly planned
To warn, to comfort, and command ;
And yet a spirit still, and bright
With something of an angel-light.

W. WORDSWORTH.

113.

Epitaph on Mrs. Margaret Paston.

So fair, so young, so innocent, so sweet,
 So ripe a judgment, and so rare a wit,
 Require at least an age in one to meet.
 In her they met ; but long they could not stay,
 'Twas gold too fine to mix without allay.
 Heaven's image was in her so well exprest,
 Her very sight upbraided all the rest ;
 Too justly ravished from an age like this,
 Now she is gone, the world is of a piece.

J. DRYDEN.

114.

A Song.

HIGH state and honours to others impart,
 But give me your heart ;
 That treasure, that treasure alone,
 I beg for my own.
 So gentle a love, so fervent a fire
 My soul does inspire ;
 That treasure, that treasure alone,
 I beg for my own.
 Your love let me crave ;
 Give me in possessing
 So matchless a blessing ;
 That empire is all I would have.
 Love's my petition,
 All my ambition ;
 If e'er you discover
 So faithful a lover,
 I'll die, I'll die,
 So give up my game.

J. DRYDEN.

115.

SWEET Spring, thou turn'st with all thy goodly train,
 Thy head with flames, thy mantle bright with flowers ;
 The zephyrs curl the green locks of the plain,
 The clouds for joy in pearls weep down their show'rs.

Thou turn'st, sweet youth, but ah ! my pleasant hours
And happy days with thee come not again ;
The sad memorials only of my pain
Do with thee turn, which turn my sweets in sour.
Thou art the same which still thou wast before,
Delicious, wanton, amiable, fair ;
But she, whose breath embalmed thy wholesome air,
Is gone ; nor gold, nor gems, her can restore.
Neglected virtue ! seasons go and come,
While thine forgot lie closèd in a tomb.

W. DRUMMOND.

116.

FROM you have I been absent in the spring,
When proud-pied April, dressed in all his trim,
Hath put a spirit of youth in everything,
That heavy Saturn¹ laughed and leaped with him.
Yet nor the lays of birds, nor the sweet smell
Of different flowers in odour and in hue,
Could make me any summer's story tell.
Or from their proud lap pluck them where they grew :
Nor did I wonder at the lilies white,
Nor praise the deep vermilion in the rose ;
They were but sweet, but figures of delight,
Drawn after you ; you pattern of all those.
Yet seemed it winter still ; and, you away,
As with your shadow I with these did play.

W. SHAKESPEARE.

117.

A feud of long standing has separated the houses of Montague and Capulet. Representatives of the former and the latter, Romeo and Juliet, have fallen deeply in love with each other. Romeo comes by night to the garden of the Capulets.

Rom. But, soft! what light through yonder window
breaks? (*Juliet appears at a window above.*)
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun!—
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,
Who is already sick and pale with grief,
That thou her maid art far more fair than she :

¹The son of Heaven and Earth, and the father of Jupiter. He is generally represented as an infirm old man.

Be not her maid, since she is envious;
 Her vestal livery is but sick and green,
 And none but fools do wear it; cast it off.
 It is my lady, O, it is my love!
 O, that she knew she were!—
 She speaks, yet she says nothing: what of that?
 Her eye discourses; I will answer it,
 I am too bold; 'tis not to me she speaks:
 Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
 Having some business, do entreat her eyes
 To twinkle in their spheres till they return.
 What if her eyes were there, they in her head?
 The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,
 As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes in heaven
 Would through the airy region stream so bright,
 That birds would sing, and think it were not night.
 See, how she leans her cheek upon her hand!
 O, that I were a glove upon that hand,
 That I might touch that cheek!

Jul. Ah me!

Rom. She speaks:

O, speak again, bright angel! for thou art
 As glorious to this night, being o'er my head,
 As is a wingèd messenger of heaven
 Unto the white-upturned wondering eyes
 Of mortals, that fall back to gaze on him,
 When he bestrides the lazy-pacing clouds,
 And sails upon the bosom of the air.

Jul. O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?
 Deny thy father, and refuse thy name;
 Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
 And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

Rom. (Aside). Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at
 this?

Jul. 'Tis but thy name that is my enemy;—
 Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.
 What's Montague? it is nor hand nor foot,
 Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part
 Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!
 What's in a name? that which we call a rose,
 By any other name would smell as sweet;
 So Romeo would, were he not Romeo called,
 Retain that dear perfection which he owes,

Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name;
And for that name, which is no part of thee,
Take all myself.

Rom. I take thee at thy word :
Call me but love, and I'll be new-baptized ;
Henceforth I never will be Romeo.

Ful. What man art thou, that, thus bescreened in night,
So stumblest on my counsel?

Rom. By a name
I know not how to tell thee who I am :
My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself,
Because it is an enemy to thee ;
Had I it written, I would tear the word.

Ful. My ears have not yet drunk a hundred words
Of that tongue's utterance, yet I know the sound :
Art thou not Romeo, and a Montague?

Rom. Neither, fair saint, if either thee dislike.

Ful. How cam'st thou hither, tell me, and wherefore ?
The orchard walls are high and hard to climb,
And the place death, considering who thou art,
If any of my kinsmen find thee here.

Rom. With love's light wings did I o'erperch these
walls ;

For stony limits cannot hold love out ;
And what love can do that dares love attempt ;
Therefore thy kinsmen are no let to me.

Ful. If they do see thee, they will murder thee.

Rom. Alack ! there lies more peril in thine eye,
Than twenty of their swords : look thou but sweet,
And I am proof against their enmity.

Ful. I would not for the world they saw thee here.

Rom. I have night's cloak to hide me from their sight ;
And, but thou love me, let them find me here :
My life were better ended by their hate,
Than death prorogued, wanting of thy love.

Ful. By whose direction foundest thou out this place?

Rom. By love, who first did prompt me to inquire ;
He lent me counsel, and I lent him eyes.
I am no pilot ; yet, wert thou as far
As that vast shore washed with the farthest sea,
I would adventure for such merchandise.

Ful. Thou knowest the mask of night is on my face ;
Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek,

For that which thou hast heard me speak to-night.
 Fain would I dwell on form ; fain, fain deny
 What I have spoke : but farewell compliment !
 Dost thou love me ? I know thou wilt say—"Ay ;"
 And I will take thy word : yet, if thou swearest,
 Thou mayst prove false ; at lovers' perjuries,
 They say, Jove laughs. O, gentle Romeo,
 If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully :
 Or if thou think'st I am too quickly won,
 I'll frown, and be perverse, and say thee nay,
 So thou wilt woo ; but, else, not for the world.
 In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond,
 And therefore thou mayst think my 'haviour light :
 But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true
 Than those that have more cunning to be strange.
 I should have been more strange, I must confess,
 But that thou overheardest, ere I was ware,
 My true love's passion : therefore pardon me ;
 And not impute this yielding to light love,
 Which the dark night hath so discovered.

Rom. Lady, by yonder blessed moon I swear,
 That tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops,—

Ful. O, swear not by the moon, the inconstant moon,
 That monthly changes in her circled orb,
 Lest that thy love prove likewise variable.

Rom. What shall I swear by ?

Ful. Do not swear at all ;
 Or, if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self,
 Which is the god of my idolatry,
 And I'll believe thee.

Rom. If my heart's dear love—

Ful. Well, do not swear : although I joy in thee,
 I have no joy of this contract to-night :
 It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden ;
 Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be,
 Ere one can say—"It lightens." Sweet, good night !
 This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath,
 May prove a beauteous flower when next we meet.
 Good night, good night ! as sweet repose and rest
 Come to thy heart as that within my breast !

Rom. O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied ?

Ful. What satisfaction canst thou have to-night ?

Rom. The exchange of thy love's faithful vow for mine.

Jul. I gave thee mine before thou didst request it;
And yet I would it were to give again.

Rom. Wouldst thou withdraw it? for what purpose, love?

Jul. But to be frank, and give it thee again.
And yet I wish but for the thing I have:

My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
My love as deep; the more I give to thee,
The more I have; for both are infinite.

[NURSE *calls within.*

I hear some noise within; dear love, adieu!

Anon, good nurse! Sweet Montague, be true.

Stay but a little, I will come again. [Exit *above.*

Rom. O blessèd, blessèd night! I am afeared,
Being in night, all this is but a dream,
Too flattering sweet to be substantial.

W. SHAKESPEARE.

118

How can my muse want subject to invent,
While thou dost breathe, that pour'st into my verse
Thine own sweet argument, too excellent
For every vulgar paper to rehearse?
O, give thyself the thanks, if aught in me,
Worthy perusal, stand against thy sight!
For who's so dumb that cannot write to thee,
When thou thyself dost give invention light?
Be thou the tenth muse, ten times more in worth
Than those old nine, which rhymers invoke;
And he that calls on thee, let him bring forth
Eternal numbers to outlive long date.

If my slight muse do please these curious days,
The pain be mine, but thine shall be the praise.

W. SHAKESPEARE.

119.

A Bride.

Now is my love all ready forth to come:
Let all the virgins therefore well await:
And ye fresh boys, that tend upon her groom,
Prepare yourselves; for he is coming straight.

Set all your things in seemly good array,
 Fit for so joyful day,
 The joyfulst day that ever sun did see.
 Fair sun ! shew forth thy favourable ray,
 And let thy lifull¹ heat not fervent be,
 For fear of burning her sunshiny face,
 Her beauty to disgrace.
 O fairest Phœbus ! father of the muse !
 If ever I did honour thee aright,
 Or sing the thing that mote thy mind delight,
 Do not thy servant's simple boon refuse ;
 But let this day, let this one day, be mine ;
 Let all the rest be thine.
 Then I thy sovereign praises loud will sing,
 That all the woods shall answer, and their echo ring.

* * * * *

Lo ! where she comes along with portly pace,
 Like Phœbe, from her chamber of the east,
 Arising forth to run her mighty race,
 Clad all in white, that seems a virgin best,
 So well it her beseems, that ye would ween
 Some angel she had been.
 Her long loose yellow locks like golden wire
 Sprinkled with pearl, and pearling flowers atween,
 Do like a golden mantle her attire ;
 And, being crownèd with a girland green,
 Seem like some maiden queen.
 Her modest eyes, abashèd to behold
 So many gazers as on her do stare,
 Upon the lowly ground affixèd are ;
 Ne dare lift up her countenance too bold,
 But blush to hear her praises sung so loud,
 So far from being proud.
 Nathless do ye still loud her praises sing,
 That all the woods may answer, and your echo ring.

* * * * *

But if ye saw that which no eyes can see,
 The inward beauty of her lively sprite,
 Garnished with heavenly gifts of high degree,
 Much more then would ye wonder at that sight,

¹ Full of life.

And stand astonished like to those which read
Medusa's¹ mazelful head.
There dwells sweet love, and constant chastity,
Unspotted faith, and comely womanhood,
Regard of honour, and mild modesty ;
There virtue reigns as queen in royal throne,
And giveth laws alone,
The which the base affections do obey,
And yield their services unto her will ;
Ne thought of things uncomely ever may
Thereto approach to tempt her mind to ill.
Had ye once seen these her celestial treasures,
And unrevealed pleasures,
Then would ye wonder, and her praises sing,
That all the woods should answer, and your echo ring.

Open the temple gates unto my love,
Open them wide that she may enter in,
And all the posts adorn as doth behove,
And all the pillars deck with girlands trim,
For to receive this saint with honour due,
That cometh in to you.
With trembling steps, and humble reverence,
She cometh in, before th' Almighty's view ;
Of her ye virgins learn obedience,
When so ye come into those holy places,
To humble your proud faces :
Bring her up to th' high altar, that she may
The sacred ceremonies there partake,
The which do endless matrimony make ;
And let the roaring organs loudly play
The praises of the Lord in lively notes ;
The whiles, with hollow throats,
The choristers the joyous anthem sing,
That all the woods may answer, and their echo ring.

Behold whiles she before the altar stands,
Hearing the holy priest that to her speaks,
And blesseth her with his two happy hands,
How the red roses flush up in her cheeks,

¹ Medusa, one of the Gorgons, had serpents on her head, instead of hair, and her glance turned people into stone, or killed them.

And the pure snow, with goodly vermeil stain
 Like crimson dyed in grain :¹
 That even the angels, which continually
 About the sacred altar do remain,
 Forget their service and about her fly,
 Oft peeping in her face, that seems more fair
 The more they on it stare.
 But her sad eyes, still fastened on the ground,
 Are governèd with goodly modesty,
 That suffers not one look to glance awry,
 Which may let in a little thought unsound.
 Why blush ye, love, to give to me your hand,
 The pledge of all our band !
 Sing, ye sweet angels, Alleluya sing,
 That all the woods may answer, and your echo ring.

E. SPENSER.

120.

Love's Good-morrow.

PACK clouds away, and welcome day,
 With night we banish sorrow ;
 Sweet air blow soft, larks mount aloft,
 To give my love good-morrow.
 Wings from the wind to please her mind,
 Notes from the lark I'll borrow ;
 Bird prune thy wing, nightingale sing,
 To give my love good-morrow,
 Notes from them both I'll borrow.

Wake from thy nest, robin red-breast,
 Sing birds in every furrow ;
 And from each hill let music shrill
 Give my fair love good-morrow.
 Blackbird, and thrush, in every bush,
 Stare, linnet, and cock-sparrow !
 You pretty elves, among yourselves,
 Sing my fair love good-morrow.
 To give my love good-morrow,
 Sing birds in every furrow.

T. HEYWOOD.

¹ A dye, obtained from the dried body of an insect.

121.

Two Lovers.

Two lovers by a moss-grown spring :
They leaned soft cheeks together there,
Mingled the dark and sunny hair,
And heard the wooing thrushes sing.
O budding time!
O love's blest prime!

Two wedded from the portal stept :
The bells made happy carollings,
The air was soft as fanning wings,
White petals on the pathway slept.
O pure-eyed bride!
O tender pride!

Two faces o'er a cradle bent :
Two hands above the head were locked ;
These pressed each other while they rocked,
Those watched a life that love had sent.
O solemn hour!
O hidden power!

Two parents by the evening fire :
The red light fell about their knees
On heads that rose by slow degrees
Like buds upon the lily spire.
O patient life!
O tender strife!

The two still sat together there,
The red light shone about their knees ;
But all the heads by slow degrees
Had gone and left that lonely pair.
O voyage fast!
O vanished past!

GEORGE ELIOT.

122.

A duke of France, dispossessed of his dominions by his younger brother, retires, with a body of adherents, to the forest of Arden.

Enter DUKE senior, AMIENS, and other Lords, in the dress of Foresters.

Duke S. Now, my co-mates, and brothers in exile,
Hath not old custom made this life more sweet

Than that of painted pomp? Are not these woods
 More free from peril than the envious court?
 Here feel we but the penalty of Adam,
 The seasons' difference; as, the icy fang,
 And churlish chiding of the winter's wind;
 Which, when it bites and blows upon my body,
 Even till I shrink with cold, I smile, and say,—
 "This is no flattery: these are counsellors
 That feelingly persuade me what I am."
 Sweet are the uses of adversity;
 Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
 Wears yet a precious jewel in his head:
 And this our life, exempt from public haunt,
 Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
 Sermons in stones, and good in everything.

Ami. I would not change it: Happy is your grace,
 That can translate the stubbornness of fortune
 Into so quiet and so sweet a style.

Duke S. Come, shall we go and kill us venison?
 And yet it irks me, the poor dappled fools,—
 Being native burghers of this desert city,—
 Should in their own confines, with forkèd heads
 Have their round haunches gored.

First Lord. Indeed, my lord,
 The melancholy Jaques grieves at that,
 And, in that kind, swears you do more usurp
 Than doth your brother that hath banished you.
 To day, my Lord of Amiens and myself
 Did steal behind him, as he lay along
 Under an oak, whose antique root peeps out
 Upon the brook that brawls along this wood:
 To the which place a poor sequestered stag,
 That from the hunter's aim had ta'en a hurt,
 Did come to languish; and, indeed, my lord,
 The wretched animal heaved forth such groans,
 That their discharge did stretch his leathern coat
 Almost to bursting; and the big round tears
 Coursed one another down his innocent nose
 In piteous chase; and thus the hairy fool,
 Much markèd of the melancholy Jaques,
 Stood on the extremest verge of the swift brook,
 Augmenting it with tears.

Duke S. But what said Jaques?

Did he not moralize this spectacle?

First Lord. O, yes, into a thousand similes.
First, for his weeping in the needless stream;
"Poor deer," quoth he, "thou makest a testament
As worldlings do, giving thy sum of more
To that which had too much." Then, being there alone,
Left and abandoned of his velvet friends;
"Tis right," quoth he; "thus misery doth part
The flux of company:" anon a careless herd,
Full of the pasture, jumps along by him,
And never stays to greet him; "Ay," quoth Jaques,
"Sweep on, you fat and greasy citizens;
'Tis just the fashion: wherefore do you look
Upon that poor and broken bankrupt there?"
Thus most invectively he pierceth through
The body of the country, city, court,
Yea, and of this our life: swearing, that we
Are mere usurpers, tyrants, and what's worse,
To fright the animals, and to kill them up,
In their assigned and native dwelling-place.

Duke S. And did you leave him in this contemplation?

Second Lord. We did, my lord, weeping and commenting
Upon the sobbing deer.

Duke S. Show me the place:
I love to cope him in these sullen fits,
For then he's full of matter.

First Lord. I'll bring you to him straight. [*Exeunt.*]

W. SHAKESPEARE.

123.

Contention of a Bird and a Musician.

PASSING from Italy to Greece, the tales
Which poets of an elder time have feigned
To glorify their Tempe,¹ bred in me
Desire of visiting that paradise.
To Thessaly I came, and living private,
Without acquaintance of more sweet companions
Than the old inmates to my love, my thoughts,
I day by day frequented silent groves
And solitary walks. One morning early

¹ A valley in Thessaly.

This incident encountered me : I heard
 The sweetest and most ravishing contention
 That art or nature ever were at strife in.
 A sound of music touched mine ears, or rather
 Indeed entranced my soul : as I stole nearer,
 Invited by the melody, I saw
 This youth, this fair-faced youth, upon his lute
 With strains of strange variety and harmony
 Proclaiming, as it seemed, so bold a challenge
 To the clear quiristers of the woods, the birds,
 That as they flocked about him, all stood silent,
 Wondering at what they heard. I wondered too.
 A nightingale,
 Nature's best skilled musician, undertakes
 The challenge ; and, for every several strain
 The well-shaped youth could touch, she sung her down ;
 He could not run division with more art
 Upon his quaking instrument, than she,
 The nightingale, did with her various notes
 Reply to.
 Some time thus spent, the young man grew at last
 Into a pretty anger ; that a bird,
 Whom art had never taught cliffs, moods, or notes,
 Should vie with him for mastery, whose study
 Had busied many hours to perfect practice :
 To end the controversy, in a rapture
 Upon his instrument he plays so swiftly,
 So many voluntaries, and so quick,
 That there was curiosity and cunning,
 Concord in discord, lines of differing method
 Meeting in one full centre of delight.
 The bird ordained to be
 Music's first martyr, strove to imitate
 These several sounds : which when her warbling throat
 Failed in, for grief down dropped she on his lute
 And brake her heart. It was the quaintest sadness,
 To see the conqueror upon her hearse
 To weep a funeral elegy of tears.
 He looks upon the trophies of his art,
 Then sighed, then wiped his eyes, then sighed and cried
 " Alas ! poor creature, I will soon revenge
 This cruelty upon the author of it.
 Henceforth this lute, guilty of innocent blood,

Shall never more betray a harmless peace
To an untimely end :” and in that sorrow,
As he was pashing¹ it against a tree,
I suddenly stept in.

J. FORD.

124.

Against Reading.

Biron. Why, all delights are vain ; but that most vain,
Which, with pain purchased, doth inherit pain :
As, painfully to pore upon a book,
To seek the light of truth ; while truth the while
Doth falsely blind the eyesight of his look :
Light, seeking light, doth light of light beguile :
So, ere you find where light in darkness lies,
Your light grows dark by losing of your eyes.
Study me how to please the eye indeed,
By fixing it upon a fairer eye ;
Who dazzling so, that eye shall be his heed,
And give him light that it was blinded by.
Study is like the heaven’s glorious sun,
That will not be deep-searched with saucy looks :
Small have continued plodders ever won,
Save base authority from others’ books.
These earthly godfathers of heaven’s lights
That give a name to every fixèd star,
Have no more profit of their shining nights
Than those that walk, and wot not what they are.
Too much to know is to know nought but fame ;
And every godfather can give a name.

W. SHAKESPEARE.

125.

The Scholar and his Dog.

I WAS a scholar : seven useful springs
Did I deflower in quotations
Of crossed opinions ’bout the soul of man ;
The more I learnt, the more I learnt to doubt.

¹ Striking.

Delight, my spaniel, slept, whilst I baised leaves,
 Tossed o'er the dunces, pored on the old print
 Of titled words : and still my spaniel slept.
 Whilst I wasted lamp-oil, baited my flesh,
 Shrunk up my veins : and still my spaniel slept.
 And still I held converse with Zabarell,¹
 Aquinas,² Scotus,² and the musty saw
 Of antick Donate :² still my spaniel slept.
 Still on went I ; first, *au sit anima*;²
 Then, an it were mortal. O hold, hold ; at that
 They're at brain-buffets, fell by the ears amain
 Pell-mell together : still my spaniel slept.
 Then, whether 'twere corporeal, local, fixed,
Ex traduce,³ but whether 't had free will
 Or no, hot philosophers
 Stood banding factions, all so strongly propped,
 I staggered, knew not which was firmer part,
 But thought, quoted, read, observed, and pryed,
 Stuffed noting-books : and still my spaniel slept.
 At length he waked, and yawned ; and by yon sky,
 For aught I know, he knew as much as I.

J. MARSTON.

126.

A Forced Plant.

FULL early trained to worship seemliness,
 This model of a child is never known
 To mix in quarrels ; that were far beneath
 Its dignity ; with gifts he bubbles o'er
 As generous as a fountain ; selfishness
 May not come near him, nor the little throng
 Of flitting pleasures tempt him from his path ;
 The wandering beggars propagate his name,
 Dumb creatures find him tender as a nun,
 And natural or supernatural fear,
 Unless it leap upon him in a dream,
 Touches him not. To enhance the wonder, see

¹ Schoolmen.² Whether there be a soul.³ From the stock ; *i.e.* by inheritance.

How arch his notices, how nice his sense
Of the ridiculous; not blind is he
To the broad follies of the licensed world,
Yet innocent himself withal, though shrewd,
And can read lectures upon innocence;
A miracle of scientific lore,
Ships he can guide across the pathless sea,
And tell you all their cunning; he can read
The inside of the earth, and spell the stars;
He knows the policies of foreign lands;
Can string you names of districts, cities, towns,
The whole world over, tight as beads of dew
Upon a gossamer thread; he sifts, he weighs;
All things are put to question; he must live
Knowing that he grows wiser every day,
Or else not live at all, and seeing too
Each little drop of wisdom as it falls
Into the dimpling cistern of his heart:
For this unnatural growth the trainer blame,
Pity the tree.—Poor human vanity,
Wert thou extinguished, little would be left
Which he could truly love; but how escape?
For, ever as a thought of purer birth
Rises to lead him toward a better clime,
Some intermeddler still is on the watch
To drive him back, and pound him, like a stray,
Within the pinfold of his own conceit.
Meanwhile old grandame earth is grieved to find
The playthings, which her love designed for him,
Unthought of: in their woodland beds the flowers
Weep, and the river sides are all forlorn.
Oh! give us once again the wishing cap.
Of Fortunatus, and the invisible coat
Of Jack the Giant-killer, Robin Hood,
And Sabra in the forest with St. George!
The child, whose love is here, at least doth reap
One precious grain, that he forgets himself.

W. WORDSWORTH.

127.

Golden Hours.

AND I think of those long mornings
 Which my thought goes far to seek,
 When betwixt the folio's turnings,
 Solemn flowed the rhythmic Greek :
 Past the pane the mountain spreading,
 Swept the sheep's-bells tinkling noise,
 While a girlish voice was reading,
 Somewhat low for *ais* and *ois*.

Then what golden hours were for us !
 While we sat together there,
 How the white vests of the chorus
 Seemed to wave up a live air !
 How the cothurns trod majestic
 Down the deep iambic lines,
 And the rolling anapæstic
 Curled like vapour over shrines !

Oh, our Æschylus,¹ the thunderous,
 How he drove the bolted breath
 Through the cloud to wedge it ponderous
 In the gnarled oak beneath !
 Oh, our Sophocles,¹ the royal
 Who was born to monarch's place,
 And who made the whole world loyal,
 Less by kingly power than grace !

Our Euripides,¹ the human,
 With his droppings of warm tears,
 And his touches of things common
 Till they rose to touch the spheres !
 Our Theocritus,² our Bion²
 And our Pindar's³ shining goals !—
 These were cup-bearers undying,
 Of the wine that 's meant for souls.

E. B. BROWNING.

¹ The three great tragedians of Athens in the 5th century, B.C.

² The chief pastoral poets of the 3rd century.

³ The great lyric poet of Thebes, who sang the games of Greece.

128.

A Poet's Thought.

TELL me, what is a poet's thought?

Is it on the sudden born?

Is it from the starlight caught?

Is it by the tempest taught?

Or by whispering morn?

Was it cradled in the brain?

Chained awhile, or nursed in night?

Was it wrought with toil and pain?

Did it bloom and fade again,

Ere it burst to light?

No more question of its birth :

Rather love its better part !

'Tis a thing of sky and earth,

Gathering all its golden worth

From the poet's heart.

B. W. PROCTER.

129.

The False May and the Real May.

MAY is a pious fraud of the almanac,

A ghastly parody of real Spring

Shaped out of snow and breathed with eastern wind ;

Or if, o'er-confident, she trust the date,

And, with her handful of anemones,

Herself as shivery, steal into the sun,

The season need but turn his hour-glass round,

And Winter suddenly, like crazy Lear,

Reels back, and brings the dead May in his arms,

Her budding breasts and wan dislustered front,

With frosty streaks and drifts of his white beard,

All overblown. Then, warmly walled with books,

While my wood fire supplies the sun's defect,

Whispering old forest-sagas in its dreams,

I take my May down from the happy shelf

Where perch the world's rare song-birds in a row,

And so bestud with stars, that they below
Would grow inured to light, and come at last
To gaze upon the sun with shameless brows.

J. MILTON.

131.

The Passion for Novelty.

Ulysses. Time hath, my lord, a wallet at his back,
Wherein he puts alms for oblivion,
A great-sized monster of ingratitudes.
Those scraps are good deeds past, which are devoured
As fast as they are made, forgot as soon
As done. Perseverance, dear my lord,
Keeps honour bright. To have done, is to hang
Quite out of fashion, like a rusty mail
In monumental mockery. Take the instant way;
For honour travels in a strait so narrow,
Where one but goes abreast: keep then the path;
For emulation hath a thousand sons,
That one by one pursue: If you give way,
Or hedge aside from the direct forthright,¹
Like to an entered tide, they all rush by,
And leave you hindmost;—
Or, like a gallant horse fallen in first rank,
Lie there for pavement to the abject rear,
O'er-run and trampled on. Then what they do in present,
Though less than yours in past, must o'ertop yours;
For time is like a fashionable host,
That slightly shakes his parting guest by the hand,
And with his arms outstretched, as he would fly,
Grasps in the comer: Welcome ever smiles,
And farewell goes out sighing. O, let not virtue seek
Remuneration for the thing it was;
For beauty, wit,
High birth, vigour of bone, desert in service,
Love, friendship, charity, are subjects all
To envious and calumniating time.
One touch of nature makes the whole world kin,—
That all, with one consent, praise new-born gauds,
Though they are made and moulded of things past;
And give to dust, that is a little gilt,
More laud than gilt o'er-dusted.

W. SHAKESPEARE.

¹ Straight forward.

132.

The False Worship of Rank.

King. 'Tis only title thou disdain'st in her, the which
 I can build up. Strange is it, that our bloods,
 Of colour, weight, and heat, poured all together,
 Would quite confound distinction, yet stand off
 In differences so mighty. If she be
 All that is virtuous, save what thou dislikest,
 A poor physician's daughter, thou dislikest
 Of virtue for the name : but do not so :
 From lowest place when virtuous things proceed,
 The place is dignified by the doer's deed :
 Where great additions swell and virtue none,
 It is a dropsied honour. Good alone
 Is good without a name. Vileness is so :
 The property by what it is should go,
 Not by the title. She is young, wise, fair ;
 In these to nature she's immediate heir ;
 And these breed honour : that is honour's scorn,
 Which challenges itself as honour's born,
 And is not like the sire. Honours thrive,
 When rather from our acts we them derive
 Than our foregoers : the mere word's a slave,
 Debauched on every tomb ; on every grave,
 A lying trophy ; and as oft is dumb,
 Where dust and damned oblivion is the tomb
 Of honoured bones indeed.

W. SHAKESPEARE.

133.

The Inequality of Human Lives.

ALAS ! what differs more than man from man !
 And whence that difference ? whence but from himself ?
 For see the universal race endowed
 With the same upright form !—The sun is fixed,
 And the infinite magnificence of heaven,
 Fixed within reach of every human eye ;
 The sleepless ocean murmurs for all ears ;
 The vernal field infuses fresh delight

Into all hearts. Throughout the world of sense,
Even as an object is sublime or fair,
That object is laid open to the view
Without reserve or veil; and as a power
Is salutary, or an influence sweet,
Are each and all enabled to perceive
That power, that influence, by impartial law.
Gifts nobler are vouchsafed alike to all;
Reason,—and, with that reason, smiles and tears;
Imagination, freedom in the will,
Conscience to guide and check, and death to be
Foretasted, immortality presumed.

* * * * *

The primal duties shine aloft—like stars;
The charities that soothe, and heal, and bless,
Are scattered at the feet of man—like flowers.
The generous inclination, the just rule,
Kind wishes, and good actions, and pure thoughts—
No mystery is here; no special boon
For high and not for low, for proudly graced
And not for meek of heart. The smoke ascends
To heaven as lightly from the cottage hearth
As from the haughty palace. He, whose soul
Ponders this true equality, may walk
The fields of earth with gratitude and hope;
Yet, in that meditation, will he find
Motive to sadder grief, as we have found,—
Lamenting ancient virtues overthrown
And for the injustice grieving, that hath made
So wide a difference betwixt man and man.

W. WORDSWORTH.

THE shepherd lad, who in the sunshine carves,
On the green turf, a dial—to divide
The silent hours; and who to that report
Can portion out his pleasures, and adapt
His round of pastoral duties, is not left
With less intelligence for *moral* things
Of gravest import. Early he perceives

Within himself, a measure and a rule,
 Which to the sun of truth he can apply,
 That shines for him, and shines for all mankind.
 Experience daily fixing his regards
 On nature's wants, he knows how few they are,
 And where they lie, how answered and appeased.
 This knowledge ample recompense affords
 For manifold privations ; he refers
 His notions to this standard ; on this rock
 Rests his desires ; and hence, in after life,
 Soul-strengthening patience, and sublime content.
 Imagination—not permitted here
 To waste her powers, as in the worldling's mind,
 On fickle pleasures, and superfluous cares,
 And trivial ostentation—is left free
 And puissant to range the solemn walks
 Of time and nature, girded by a zone
 That, while it binds, invigorates and supports.

* * * * *

Within the soul a faculty abides,
 That with interpositions, which would hide
 And darken, so can deal, that they become
 Contingencies of pomp ; and serve to exalt
 Her native brightness. As the ample moon,
 In the deep stillness of a summer even
 Rising behind a thick and lofty grove,
 Burns like an unconsuming fire of light,
 In the green trees ; and, kindling on all sides
 Their leafy umbrage, turns the dusky veil
 Into a substance glorious as her own,
 Yea, with her own incorporated, by power
 Capacious and serene ; like power abides
 In man's celestial spirit ; virtue thus
 Sets forth and magnifies herself ; thus feeds
 A calm, a beautiful, and silent fire,
 From the encumbrances of mortal life,
 From error, disappointment,—nay from guilt ;
 And sometimes, so relenting justice wills,
 From palpable oppressions of despair.

W. WORDSWORTH.

135.

Sleep.

King Henry IV. How many thousands of my poorest subjects

Are at this hour asleep! O sleep, O gentle sleep,
Nature's soft nurse, how have I frightened thee,
That thou no more wilt weigh my eyelids down,
And steep my senses in forgetfulness!
Why, rather, sleep, liest thou in smoky cribs,
Upon uneasy pallets stretching thee,
And hushed with buzzing night-flies to thy slumber,
Than in the perfumed chambers of the great,
Under the canopies of costly state,
And lulled with sound of sweetest melody?
O, thou dull god, why liest thou with the vile
In loathsome beds; and leavest the kingly couch,
A watch-case, or a common 'larum-bell?
Wilt thou upon the high and giddy mast,
Seal up the ship-boy's eyes, and rock his brains
In cradle of the rude imperious surge;
And in the visitation of the winds,
Who take the ruffian billows by the top,
Curling their monstrous heads, and hanging them
With deafening clamour in the slippery clouds,
That, with the hurly, death itself awakes—
Canst thou, O partial sleep! give thy repose
To the wet sea-boy in an hour so rude;
And, in the calmest and most stillest night,
With all appliances and means to boot,
Deny it to a king? Then, happy low, lie down!
Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.

W. SHAKESPEARE.

136.

To Sleep.

A FLOCK of sheep that leisurely pass by
One after one; the sound of rain, and bees
Murmuring; the fall of rivers, winds, and seas,
Smooth fields, white sheets of water, and pure sky;—

I've thought of all by turns, and still I lie
 Sleepless; and soon the small birds' melodies
 Must hear, first uttered from my orchard trees,
 And the first cuckoo's melancholy cry.

Even thus last night, and two nights more I lay,
 And could not win thee, Sleep! by any stealth:
 So do not let me wear to-night away:
 Without thee what is all the morning's wealth?
 Come, blessèd barrier between day and day,
 Dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health!

W. WORDSWORTH.

137.

Song for Saint Cecilia's Day.

FROM Harmony, from heavenly Harmony
 This universal frame began.

When Nature underneath a heap
 Of jarring atoms lay

And could not heave her head,
 The tuneful voice was heard from high
 "Arise! ye more than dead!"

Then cold, and hot, and moist, and dry
 In order to their stations leap,

And Music's power obey.

From Harmony, from heavenly Harmony
 This universal frame began:

From Harmony to Harmony
 Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
 The diapason closing full in Man.

What passion cannot Music raise and quell?
 When Jubal¹ struck the chorded shell
 His listening brethren stood around,
 And, wondering, on their faces fell
 To worship that celestial sound.

Less than a God they thought there could not dwell
 Within the hollow of that shell
 That spoke so sweetly and so well.

What passion cannot Music raise and quell?

¹ "He was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ."

The trumpet's loud clangor
Excites us to arms,
With shrill notes of anger
And mortal alarms.
The double double double beat
Of the thundering drum
Cries "Hark! the foes come;
Charge, charge, 'tis too late to retreat!"

The soft complaining flute
In dying notes discovers
The woes of hopeless lovers
Whose dirge is whispered by the warbling lute.

Sharp violins proclaim
Their jealous pangs and desperation,
Fury, frantic indignation,
Depth of pains, and height of passion
For the fair disdainful dame.

But oh! what art can teach,
What human voice can reach
The sacred organ's praise!
Notes inspiring holy love,
Notes that wing their heavenly ways
To mend the choirs above.

Orpheus¹ could lead the savage race,
And trees uprooted left their place
Sequacious of the lyre:
But bright Cecilia raised the wonder higher:
When to her organ vocal breath was given,
An Angel heard, and straight appeared—
Mistaking Earth for Heaven!

GRAND CHORUS.

As from the power of sacred lays
The spheres began to move,
And sung the great Creator's praise
To all the blest above;

¹ A great musician. He received a lyre from the god Apollo, upon which he played so beautifully that the rivers stopped their courses, wild beasts were subdued, and the mountains came to listen.

So when the last and dreadful hour
 This crumbling pageant shall devour,
 The trumpet shall be heard on nigh,
 The dead shall live, the living die,
 And Music shall untune the sky.

J. DRYDEN.

138.

Music in Heaven.

—All

The multitude of Angels, with a shout
 Loud as from numbers without number, sweet
 As from blest voices, uttering joy, Heaven rung
 With jubilee, and loud hosannas filled
 The eternal regions. Lowly reverent
 Towards either throne they bow, and to the ground
 With solemn adoration down they cast
 Their crowns, inwove with amarant and gold—
 Immortal amarant, a flower which once
 In Paradise, fast by the Tree of Life,
 Began to bloom, but, soon for Man's offence
 To Heaven removed where first it grew, there grows
 And flowers aloft, shading the Fount of Life,
 And where the River of Bliss through midst of Heaven
 Rolls o'er Elysian flowers her amber stream ;
 With these, that never fade, the Spirits elect
 Bind their resplendent locks, inwreathed with beams.
 Now in loose garlands thick thrown off, the bright
 Pavement, that like a sea of jasper shone,
 Impurpled with celestial roses smiled.
 Then, crowned again, their golden harps they took—
 Harps ever tuned, that glittering by their side
 Like quivers hung ; and with preamble sweet
 Of charming symphony they introduce
 Their sacred song, and waken raptures high :
 No voice exempt, no voice but well could join
 Melodious part ; such concord is in Heaven.

J. MILTON.

139.

To Music, to becalm his Fever.

CHARM me asleep, and melt me so
With thy delicious numbers ;
That being ravished, hence I go
Away in easy slumbers.
Ease my sick head,
And make my bed,
Thou power that canst sever
From me this ill ;—
And quickly still,
Though thou not kill
My fever.

Thou sweetly canst convert the same
From a consuming fire,
Into a gentle-licking flame,
And make it thus expire.
Then make me weep
My pains asleep,
And give me such repose,
That I, poor I,
May think, thereby,
I live and die
'Mongst roses.

Fall on me like a silent dew,
Or like those maiden showers,
Which, by the peep of day, do strew
A baptism o'er the flowers.
Melt, melt my pains
With thy soft strains ;
That having ease me given,
With full delight,
I leave this light,
And take my flight
For Heaven.

R. HERRICK.

140.

Othello, a Moor, accused of having employed witchcraft to win Desdemona, a noble lady of Venice, describes the manner of his courtship.

Othello. So justly to your grave ears I'll present
How I did thrive in this fair lady's love,
And she in mine.

* * * * *

Her father loved me; oft invited me;
Still questioned me the story of my life,
From year to year; the battles, sieges, fortunes,
That I have passed.
I ran it through, even from my boyish days,
To the very moment that he bade me tell it;
Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances,
Of moving accidents, by flood and field;
Of hair breadth 'scapes i' the imminent deadly breach;
Of being taken by the insolent foe,
And sold to slavery; of my redemption thence,
And portance in my travels' history:
Wherein of antres vast and deserts idle,
Rough quarries, rocks, and hills whose heads touch heaven,
It was my hint to speak,—such was the process;
And of the Cannibals that each other eat,
The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads
Do grow beneath their shoulders. These things to hear,
Would Desdemona seriously incline;
But still the house affairs would draw her thence,
Which ever as she could with haste despatch,
She'd come again, and with a greedy ear
Devour up my discourse: which I observing
Took once a pliant hour, and found good means
To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart,
That I would all my pilgrimage dilate,
Whereof by parcels she had something heard,
But not intently: I did consent;
And often did beguile her of her tears,
When I did speak of some distressful stroke,
That my youth suffered. My story being done,
She gave me for my pains a world of sighs:
She swore, in faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing strange;

'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful:
She wished she had not heard it; yet she wished
That heaven had made her such a man: she thanked me;
And bade me, if I had a friend that loved her,
I should but teach him how to tell my story,
And that would woo her. Upon this hint I spake:
She loved me for the dangers I had passed,
And I loved her that she did pity them.
This only is the witchcraft I have used.

W. SHAKESPEARE.

141.

A Picture of Venice.

AROUND me are the stars and waters—
Worlds mirrored in the ocean, goodlier sight
Than torches glared back by a gaudy glass;
And the great element, which is to space
What ocean is to earth, spreads its blue depths,
Softened with the first breathings of the spring;
The high moon sails upon her beauteous way,
Serenely smoothing o'er the lofty walls
Of those tall piles and sea-girt palaces,
Whose porphyry pillars, and whose costly fronts,
Fraught with the orient spoil of many marbles,
Like altars ranged along the broad canal,
Seem each a trophy of some mighty deed,
Reared up from out the waters, scarce less strangely
Than those more massy and mysterious giants
Of architecture, those Titanian fabrics,
Which point in Egypt's plains to times that have
No other record. All is gentle: naught
Stirs rudely; but, congenial with the night,
Whatever walks is gliding like a spirit.
The tinklings of some vigilant guitars
Of sleepless lovers to a wakeful mistress,
And cautious opening of the casement, showing
That he is not unheard; while her young hand,
Fair as the moonlight of which it seems part,
So delicately white, it trembles in
The act of opening the forbidden lattice,
To let in love through music, makes his heart

Thrill like his lyre-strings at the sight ; the dash
 Phosphoric of the oar, or rapid twinkle
 Of the far lights of skimming gondolas,
 And the responsive voices of the choir
 Of boatmen answering back with verse for verse ;
 Some dusky shadow checkering the Rialto ;¹
 Some glimmering palace roof, or tapering spire,
 Are all the sights and sounds which here pervade
 The ocean-born and earth-commanding city.

LORD BYRON.

142.

Cassius expresses to Brutus his strong disapprobation of the ever-increasing power of Cæsar.

Cassius. Well, honour is the subject of my story.
 I cannot tell what you and other men
 Think of this life ; but, for my single self,
 I had as lief not be, as live to be
 In awe of such a thing as I myself.
 I was born free as Cæsar ; so were you :
 We both have fed as well ; and we can both
 Endure the winter's cold as well as he :
 For once, upon a raw and gusty day,
 The troubled Tiber chafing with her shores,
 Cæsar said to me, " Darest thou, Cassius, now
 Leap in with me into this angry flood,
 And swim to yonder point ? "—Upon the word,
 Accoutred as I was, I plunged in,
 And bade him follow ; so indeed he did.
 The torrent roared ; and we did buffet it
 With lusty sinews, throwing it aside,
 And stemming it with hearts of controversy ;
 But, ere we could arrive the point proposed,
 Cæsar cried, " Help me, Cassius, or I sink ! "
 I, as Æneas,² our great ancestor,
 Did from the flames of Troy upon his shoulder
 The old Anchises bear ; so from the waves of Tiber

¹ A bridge in Venice.

² A Trojan prince, from whom the Roman emperors chose to trace their descent. It is told of him that, when Troy was in flames, he took his father, Anchises, on his back and carried him away.

Did I the tired Cæsar. And this man
Is now become a god ; and Cassius is
A wretched creature, and must bend his body,
If Cæsar carelessly but nod on him.
He had a fever when he was in Spain ;
And, when the fit was on him, I did mark
How he did shake : 'tis true, this god did shake :
His coward lips did from their colour fly ;
And that same eye, whose bend doth awe the world,
Did lose his lustre. I did hear him groan :
Ay, and that tongue of his, that bade the Romans
Mark him, and write his speeches in their books,—
Alas ! it cried, "Give me some drink, Titinius,"
As a sick girl. Ye gods, it doth amaze me,
A man of such a feeble temper should
So get the start of the majestic world,
And bear the palm alone.

* * * * *

Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world
Like a Colossus ; and we petty men
Walk under his huge legs, and peep about
To find ourselves dishonourable graves.
Men at some time are masters of their fates.
The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
But in ourselves, that we are underlings.
Brutus, and Cæsar ; what should be in that Cæsar ?
Why should that name be sounded more than yours ?
Write them together, yours is as fair a name ;
Sound them, it doth become the mouth as well ;
Weigh them, it is as heavy ; conjure with them,
Brutus will start a spirit as soon as Cæsar.
Now, in the names of all the gods at once,
Upon what meat doth this our Cæsar feed,
That he is grown so great ? Age, thou art shamed !
Rome, thou hast lost the breed of noble bloods !
When went there by an age, since the great flood,
But it was famed with more than with one man ?
When could they say till now, that talked of Rome,
That her wide walls encompassed but one man ?

W. SHAKESPEARE.

143.

The assassins of Cæsar allow his friend Mark Antony to deliver a public funeral oration. They go away, and leave him alone with the body.

Antony. O, pardon me, thou piece of bleeding earth,
That I am meek and gentle with these butchers!
Thou art the ruins of the noblest man
That ever livèd in the tide of times.
Woe to the hand that shed this costly blood!
Over thy wounds now do I prophesy,—
Which, like dumb mouths, do ope their ruby lips,
To beg the voice and utterance of my tongue;—
A curse shall light upon the limbs of men;
Domestic fury, and fierce civil strife,
Shall cumber all the parts of Italy;
Blood and destruction shall be so in use,
And dreadful objects so familiar,
That mothers shall but smile, when they behold
Their infants quartered with the hands of war;
All pity choked with custom of fell deeds;
And Cæsar's spirit, ranging for revenge,
With Até¹ by his side, come hot from hell,
Shall in these confines, with a monarch's voice,
Cry "Havock!" and let slip the dogs of war;
That this foul deed shall smell above the earth
With carrion men, groaning for burial.

W. SHAKESPEARE.

144.

Brutus Addresses the Roman People after the Assassination of Cæsar.

ROMANS, countrymen, and lovers! hear me for my cause,
and be silent that you may hear: believe me for mine
honour, and have respect to mine honour, that you may
believe: censure me in your wisdom, and awake your
senses, that you may the better judge. If there be any
in this assembly, any dear friend of Cæsar's, to him I say,
that Brutus' love to Cæsar was no less than his. If then
that friend demand, why Brutus rose against Cæsar, this
is my answer:—Not that I loved Cæsar less, but that I

¹ The goddess of all evil and discord.

loved Rome more. Had you rather Cæsar were living, and die all slaves, than that Cæsar were dead, to live all free men? As Cæsar loved me, I weep for him; as he was fortunate, I rejoice at it; as he was valiant, I honour him; but, as he was ambitious, I slew him. There is tears for his love, joy for his fortune, honour for his valour, and death for his ambition. Who is here so base, that would be a bondman? If any, speak; for him have I offended. Who is here so rude, that would not be a Roman? If any, speak; for him have I offended. Who is here so vile, that will not love his country? If any, speak; for him have I offended. I pause for a reply.

* * * * *

Then none have I offended. I have done no more to Cæsar than you shall do to Brutus. The question of his death is enrolled in the Capitol: his glory not extenuated, wherein he was worthy; nor his offences enforced, for which he suffered death.

Here comes his body, mourned by Mark Antony; who, though he had no hand in his death, shall receive the benefit of his dying, a place in the commonwealth; as which of you shall not? With this I depart;—that, as I slew my best lover for the good of Rome, I have the same dagger for myself, when it shall please my country to need my death.

W. SHAKESPEARE.

145.

Mark Antony's Oration over the Dead Body of Cæsar.

Ant. Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears;
I come to bury Cæsar, not to praise him.
The evil that men do lives after them;
The good is oft interrèd with their bones;
So let it be with Cæsar. The noble Brutus
Hath told you Cæsar was ambitious:
If it were so, it was a grievous fault,
And grievously hath Cæsar answered it.
Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest,—
For Brutus is an honourable man;

So are they all, all honourable men—
 Come I to speak in Cæsar's funeral.
 He was my friend, faithful and just to me :
 But Brutus says he was ambitious,
 And Brutus is an honourable man.
 He hath brought many captives home to Rome,
 Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill :
 Did this in Cæsar seem ambitious ?
 When that the poor have cried, Cæsar hath wept :
 Ambition should be made of sterner stuff :
 Yet Brutus says he was ambitious,
 And Brutus is an honourable man.
 You all did see that, on the Lupercal,
 I thrice presented him a kingly crown,
 Which he did thrice refuse :—was this ambition ?
 Yet Brutus says he was ambitious ;
 And, sure, he is an honourable man.
 I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,
 But here I am to speak what I do know.
 You all did love him once, not without cause ;
 What cause withholds you then to mourn for him ?
 O judgment ! thou art fled to brutish beasts,
 And men have lost their reason !—Bear with me ;
 My heart is in the coffin there with Cæsar,
 And I must pause till it come back to me.

* * * * *

But yesterday the word of Cæsar might
 Have stood against the world : now lies he there,
 And none so poor to do him reverence.
 O masters ! if I were disposed to stir
 Your hearts and minds to mutiny and rage,
 I should do Brutus wrong, and Cassius wrong,
 Who, you all know, are honourable men.
 I will not do them wrong ; I rather choose
 To wrong the dead, to wrong myself and you,
 Than I will wrong such honourable men.
 But here's a parchment with the seal of Cæsar ;—
 I found it in his closet, 'tis his will :
 Let but the commons hear this testament—
 Which, pardon me, I do not mean to read—
 And they would go and kiss dead Cæsar's wounds,
 And dip their napkins in his sacred blood ;

Yea, beg a hair of him for memory,
And, dying, mention it within their wills,
Bequeathing it, as a rich legacy,
Unto their issue.

* * * *

If you have tears, prepare to shed them now.
You all do know this mantle : I remember
The first time ever Cæsar put it on ;
'Twas on a summer's evening, in his tent,
That day he overcame the Nervii.—
Look, in this place ran Cassius' dagger through :
See what a rent the envious Casca made :
Through this, the well-belovèd Brutus stabbed ;
And, as he plucked his cursèd steel away,
Mark how the blood of Cæsar followed it,
As rushing out of doors, to be resolved
If Brutus so unkindly knocked, or no ;
For Brutus, as you know, was Cæsar's angel :
Judge, O you gods, how dearly Cæsar loved him !
This was the most unkindest cut of all ;
For when the noble Cæsar saw him stab,
Ingratitude, more strong than traitors' arms,
Quite vanquished him ; then burst his mighty heart ;
And, in his mantle muffling up his face,
Even at the base of Pompey's statue,
Which all the while ran blood, great Cæsar fell.
O, what a fall was there, my countrymen !
Then I, and you, and all of us fell down,
Whilst bloody treason flourished over us.
O, now you weep ; and, I perceive, you feel
The dint of pity : these are gracious drops.
Kind souls ! what, weep you when you but behold
Our Cæsar's vesture wounded ? Look you here ;
Here is himself, marred, as you see, with traitors.

* * * *

Good friends, sweet friends, let me not stir you up
To such a sudden flood of mutiny.
They, that have done this deed, are honourable :
What private griefs they have, alas, I know not,
That made them do it : they are wise and honourable,
And will, no doubt, with reasons answer you.
I come not, friends, to steal away your hearts :

I am no orator, as Brutus is ;
 But, as you know me all, a plain blunt man,
 That love my friend ; and that they know full well
 That gave me public leave to speak of him.
 For I have neither wit, nor words, nor worth,
 Action, nor utterance, nor the power of speech
 To stir men's blood : I only speak right on ;
 I tell you that which you yourselves do know ;
 Show you sweet Cæsar's wounds, poor, poor dumb mouths,
 And bid them speak for me : but were I Brutus,
 And Brutus Antony, there were an Antony
 Would ruffle up your spirits, and put a tongue
 In every wound of Cæsar, that should move
 The stones of Rome to rise and mutiny.

W. SHAKESPEARE.

146.

**Inscriptions supposed to be found in and
 near a Hermit's Cell.**

HOPES, what are they?—Beads of morning
 Strung on slender blades of grass ;
 Or a spider's web adorning
 In a strait and treacherous pass.

What are fears but voices airy?
 Whispering harm where harm is not ;
 And deluding the unwary
 Till the fatal bolt is shot !

What is glory?—in the socket
 See how dying tapers fare !
 What is pride?—A whizzing rocket
 That would emulate a star.

What is friendship?—do not trust her,
 Nor the vows which she has made ;
 Diamonds dart their brightest lustre
 From a palsy-shaken head.

What is truth?—a staff rejected ;
 Duty?—an unwelcome clog ;
 Joy?—a moon by fits reflected
 In a swamp or watery bog :

Bright, as if through ether steering,
To the traveller's eye it shone:
He hath hailed it reappearing—
And as quickly it is gone;

Gone, as if for ever hidden;
Or misshapen to the sight,
And by sullen weeds forbidden
To resume its native light.

What is youth?—a dancing billow,
(Winds behind, and rocks before!)
Age?—a drooping, tottering willow
On a flat and lazy shore.

What is peace?—when pain is over,
And love ceases to rebel,
Let the last faint sigh discover
That precedes the passing knell!

W. WORDSWORTH.

147.

HAST thou seen, with flash incessant,
Bubbles gliding under ice,
Bodied forth and evanescent,
No one knows by what device?

Such are thoughts!—A wind-swept meadow
Mimicking a troubled sea,
Such is life; and death a shadow
From the rock eternity!

W. WORDSWORTH.

148.

Bolingbroke, afterwards Henry IV., has been sentenced to six years' exile by King Richard II., his cousin. Gaunt, the father of Bolingbroke, attempts to console him.

Gaunt. O, to what purpose dost thou hoard thy words,
That thou return'st no greeting to thy friends?

Bolingbroke. I have too few to take my leave of you,
When the tongue's office should be prodigal
To breathe the abundant dolour of the heart.

Gaunt. Thy grief is but thy absence for a time.

Bolingbroke. Joy absent, grief is present for that time.

Gaunt. What is six winters? they are quickly gone.

Bolingbroke. To men in joy; but grief makes one hour ten.

Gaunt. Call it a travel that thou takest for pleasure.

Bolingbroke. My heart will sigh when I miscall it so,
Which finds it an enforced pilgrimage.

Gaunt. The sullen passage of thy weary steps
Esteem a foil wherein thou art to set
The precious jewel of thy home return.

Bolingbroke. Nay, rather every tedious stride I make
Will but remember me what a deal of world
I wander from the jewels that I love.
Must I not serve a long apprenticeship
To foreign passages; and in the end,
Having my freedom, boast of nothing else,
But that I was a journeyman to grief?

Gaunt. All places that the eye of heaven visits,
Are to a wise man ports and happy havens.
Teach thy necessity to reason thus;
There is no virtue like necessity.
Think not the king did banish thee;
But thou the king. Woe doth the heavier sit,
Where it perceives it is but faintly borne.
Go, say—I sent thee forth to purchase honour;
And not—the king exiled thee; or suppose,
Devouring pestilence hangs in our air,
And thou art flying to a fresher clime.
Look, what thy soul holds dear, imagine it
To lie that way thou goest, not whence thou comest:
Suppose the singing birds, musicians;
The grass whereon thou tread'st, the presence strewed;
The flowers, fair ladies; and thy steps, no more
Than a delightful measure, or a dance;
For gnarling sorrow hath less power to bite
The man that mocks at it, and sets it light.

Bolingbroke. O, who can hold a fire in his hand,
By thinking on the frosty Caucasus?
Or cloy the hungry edge of appetite,
By bare imagination of a feast?
Or wallow naked in December snow,
By thinking on fantastic summer's heat?

O, no ! the apprehension of the good
Gives but the greater feeling to the worse.
Fell sorrow's tooth doth never rankle more
Than when it bites, but lanceth not the sore.

Gaunt. Come, come, my son ; I 'll bring thee on thy way :
Had I thy youth and cause, I would not stay.

Bolingbroke. Then, England's ground, farewell ; sweet
soil, adieu ;

My mother, and my nurse, that bears me yet !
Where'er I wander, boast of this I can ;—
Though banished, yet a trueborn Englishman.

W. SHAKESPEARE.

149.

Gaunt, on his deathbed, predicts disastrous times for England and her king.

Gaunt. Methinks I am a prophet new inspired,
And thus, expiring, do foretell of him :—
His rash fierce blaze of riot cannot last ;
For violent fires soon burn out themselves ;
Small showers last long, but sudden storms are short ;
He tires betimes, that spurs too fast betimes ;
With eager feeding food doth choke the feeder ;
Light vanity, insatiate cormorant,
Consuming means, soon preys upon itself.
This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,¹
This other Eden, demi-paradise ;
This fortress, built by nature for herself,
Against infection, and the hand of war ;
This happy breed of men, this little world ;
This precious stone set in the silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall,
Or as a moat defensive to a house,
Against the envy of less happier lands ;
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England,
This nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings,
Feared by their breed, and famous by their birth,
Renowned for their deeds as far from home,
For Christian service and true chivalry,
As is the sepulchre in stubborn Jewry,

¹ The god of war, among the Greeks.

Of the world's ransom, blessèd Mary's son ;—
 This land of such dear souls, this dear, dear land,
 Dear for her reputation through the world,
 Is now leased¹ out, I die pronouncing it,
 Like to a tenement or pelting² farm :
 England, bound in with the triumphant sea,
 Whose rocky shore beats back the envious siege
 Of watery Neptune, is now bound in with shame,
 With inky blots, and rotten parchment bonds :
 That England, that was wont to conquer others,
 Hath made a shameful conquest of itself.
 O, would the scandal vanish with my life,
 How happy then were my ensuing death !

W. SHAKESPEARE.

150.

Rumours of Disaster to the King are afloat.

SALISBURY—A CAPTAIN.

Captain. 'Tis thought, the king is dead ; we will not stay.
 The bay-trees in our country are all withered,
 And meteors fright the fixèd stars of heaven ;
 The pale-faced moon looks bloody on the earth,
 And lean-looked prophets whisper fearful change :
 Rich men look sad, and ruffians dance and leap ;—
 The one, in fear to lose what they enjoy ;
 The other, to enjoy by rage or war.
 These signs forerun the death or fall of kings—
 Farewell ; our countrymen are gone and fled,
 As well assured, Richard their king is dead. [Exit.

Salisbury. Ah, Richard ! with the eyes of heavy mind,
 I see thy glory, like a shooting star,
 Fall to the base earth from the firmament !
 Thy sun sets weeping in the lowly west,
 Witnessing storms to come, woe, and unrest.
 Thy friends are fled, to wait upon thy foes ;
 And crossly to thy good all fortune goes.

W, SHAKESPEARE,

¹ In order to increase his revenue, Richard had farmed out his realm to the Earl of Wiltshire. ² Paltry.

of Cousin, Bolingbroke,
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152.

A messenger comes to the king from Bolingbroke.

King Richard. What must the king do now? must he submit?

The king shall do it. Must he be deposed?
 The king shall be contented. Must he lose
 The name of king? O' God's name, let it go.
 I'll give my jewels for a set of beads;
 My gorgeous palace for a hermitage;
 My gay apparel for an almsman's gown;
 My figured goblets for a dish of wood;
 My sceptre for a palmer's walking staff;
 My subjects for a pair of carved saints;
 And my large kingdom for a little grave,
 A little, little grave, an obscure grave;—
 Or I'll be buried in the king's highway,
 Some way of common trade, where subjects' feet
 May hourly trample on their sovereign's head;
 For on my heart they tread now whilst I live;
 And, buried once, why not upon my head?
 Aumerle, thou weep'st. My tender-hearted cousin!
 We'll make foul weather with despised tears;
 Our sighs and they shall lodge the summer corn,
 And make a dearth in this revolting land.
 Or shall we play the wantons with our woes,
 And make some pretty match with shedding tears?
 As thus,—to drop them still upon one place,
 Till they have fretted us a pair of graves
 Within the earth; and, therein laid,—“there lies
 Two kinsmen, digged their graves with weeping eyes.”
 Would not this ill do well? Well, well, I see
 I talk but idly, and you mock at me.

W. SHAKESPEARE.

153.

The Duke of York describes to his wife the entry of Bolingbroke and Richard into London.

York. Then, as I said, the duke, great Bolingbroke,
 Mounted upon a hot and fiery steed,
 Which his aspiring rider seemed to know,—
 With slow but stately pace kept on his course,

Whilst all tongues cried—"God save thee, Bolingbroke!"
You would have thought the very windows spake,
So many greedy looks of young and old
Through casements darted their desiring eyes
Upon his visage; and that all the walls,
With painted imagery, had said at once,—

"Jesu preserve thee! welcome, Bolingbroke!"
Whilst he, from the one side to the other turning,
Bareheaded, lower than his proud steed's neck,
Bespake them thus;—"I thank you, countrymen:"
And thus still doing, thus he passed along.

* * * * *

As, in a theatre, the eyes of men,
After a well-graced actor leaves the stage,
Are idly bent on him that enters next,
Thinking his prattle to be tedious;
Even so, or with much more contempt, men's eyes
Did scowl on Richard; no man cried, "God save him!"
No joyful tongue gave him his welcome home:
But dust was thrown upon his sacred head;
Which with such gentle sorrow he shook off,—
His face still combating with tears and smiles,
The badges of his grief and patience,—
That had not God, for some strong purpose, steeled
The hearts of men, they must perforce have melted,
And barbarism itself have pitied him.

W. SHAKESPEARE.

154.

Cardinal Wolsey, deprived in a moment, by the king, of his exalted position, and disgraced before the world, charges his servant Cromwell to guide his own life more wisely.

Wolsey. Cromwell, I did not think to shed a tear
In all my miseries; but thou hast forced me,
Out of thy honest truth, to play the woman.
Let's dry our eyes: and thus far hear me, Cromwell;
And, when I am forgotten, as I shall be,
And sleep in dull cold marble, where no mention
Of me more must be heard of,—say, I taught thee;

N

Say, Wolsey,—that once trod the ways of glory,
 And sounded all the depths and shoals of honour,—
 Found thee a way, out of his wreck, to rise in ;
 A sure and safe one, though thy master missed it.
 Mark but my fall, and that that ruined me.
 Cromwell, I charge thee, fling away ambition ;
 By that sin fell the angels ; how can man then,
 The image of his Maker, hope to win by't ?
 Love thyself last ; cherish those hearts that hate thee :
 Corruption wins not more than honesty :
 Still in thy right hand carry gentle peace,
 To silence envious tongues : be just, and fear not :
 Let all the ends thou aim'st at be thy country's, ~~WICHAMPO~~
 Thy God's, and truth's ; then if thou fall'st, O Cromwell,
 Thou fall'st a blessed martyr.

W. SHAKESPEARE.

155.

The Last Conqueror.

VICTORIOUS men of earth, no more
 Proclaim how wide your empires are ;
 Though you bind in every shore
 And your triumphs reach as far
 As night or day,
 Yet you, proud monarchs, must obey
 And mingle with forgotten ashes, when
 Death calls ye to the crowd of common men.

Devouring Famine, Plague, and War,
 Each able to undo mankind,
 Death's servile emissaries are ;
 Nor to these alone confined,
 He hath at will
 More quaint and subtle ways to kill ;
 A smile or kiss, as he will use the art,
 Shall have the cunning skill to break a heart.

J. SHIRLEY.

156.

Death the Leveller.

THE glories of our birth and state
Are shadows, not substantial things ;
There is no armour against fate ;
Death lays his icy hand on kings.
Sceptre and crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.

Some men with swords may reap the field,
And plant fresh laurels where they kill ;
But their strong nerves at last must yield ;
They tame but one another still.
Early or late,
They stoop to fate,
And must give up their murmuring breath,
When they, pale captives, creep to death.

The garlands wither on your brow ;
Then boast no more your mighty deeds ;
Upon death's purple altar now,
See where the victor victim bleeds.
All heads must come
To the cold tomb ;
Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet and blossom in the dust.

J. SHIRLEY.

157.

Constance hears that the King of France (who had sworn to support the claims of her son Arthur to the English throne against the usurper John) has made peace with the latter.

Constance. It is not so ; thou hast misspoke, misheard.
Be well advised ; tell o'er thy tale again.
It cannot be ; thou dost but say 'tis so ;
I trust I may not trust thee ; for thy word

Is but the vain breath of a common man :
 Believe me, I do not believe thee, man ;
 I have a king's oath to the contrary.
 Thou shalt be punished for thus frightening me ;
 For I am sick, and capable of fears ;
 Oppressed with wrongs, and therefore full of fears ;
 A widow, husbandless, subject to fears ;
 A woman, naturally born to fears ;
 And though thou now confess thou didst but jest
 With my vexed spirits, I cannot take a truce,
 But they will quake and tremble all this day.
 What dost thou mean by shaking of thy head ?
 Why dost thou look so sadly on my son ?
 What means that hand upon that breast of thine ?
 Why holds thine eye that lamentable rheum,
 Like a proud river peering o'er his bounds ?
 Be these sad signs confirmers of thy words ?
 Then speak again ; not all thy former tale,
 But this one word, whether thy tale be true.

* * * * *

O, if thou teach me to believe this sorrow,
 Teach thou this sorrow how to make me die ;
 And let belief and life encounter so,
 As doth the fury of two desperate men,
 Which, in the very meeting, fall and die.—
 Lewis marry Blanch ! Oh, boy, then where art thou ?
 France friend with England ! What becomes of me ?
 Fellow, be gone : I cannot brook thy sight ;
 This news hath made thee a most ugly man.

W. SHAKESPEARE.

CONSTANCE—KING PHILIP—ARCHDUKE OF AUSTRIA.

Constance. You have beguiled me with a counterfeit,
 Resembling majesty ; which being touched and tried,
 Proves valueless. You are forsworn, forsworn ;
 You came in arms to spill mine enemies' blood,
 But now in arms you strengthen it with yours.

The grappling vigour and rough frown of war
Is cold in amity and painted peace,
And our oppression hath made up this league.
Arm, arm, you heavens, against these perjured kings !
A widow cries ; be husband to me, heavens !
Let not the hours of this ungodly day
Wear out the day in peace ; but, ere sunset,
Set armed discord 'twixt these perjured kings !
Hear me, O, hear me !

* * * * *

War ! war ! no peace ! peace is to me a war.
O Lymoges ! O Austria ! thou dost shame
That bloody spoil : thou slave, thou wretch, thou coward !
Thou little valiant, great in villany !
Thou ever strong upon the stronger side !
Thou Fortune's champion, that dost never fight
But when her humorous ladyship is by
To teach thee safety ! thou art perjured too,
And soothest up greatness ! What a fool art thou,
A ramping fool ; to brag and stamp and swear,
Upon my party ! Thou cold-blooded slave,
Hast thou not spoke like thunder on my side ;
Been sworn my soldier, bidding me depend
Upon thy stars, thy fortune, and thy strength ;
And dost thou now fall over to my foes ?
Thou wear a lion's hide ! doff it for shame,
And hang a calf's skin on those recreant limbs.

W. SHAKESPEARE.

159.

CONSTANCE—KING PHILIP—PANDULPH.

Constance. Lo, now ! now see the issue of your peace !
King Philip. Patience, good lady ! comfort, gentle
Constance !

Constance. No, I defy all counsel, all redress,
But that which ends all counsel, true redress,
Death, death. O amiable, lovely death !
Thou odoriferous stench ! sound rottenness !

Arise forth from the couch of lasting night,
 Thou hate and terror to prosperity,
 And I will kiss thy detestable bones ;
 And put my eyeballs in thy vaulty brows ;
 And ring these fingers with thy household worms ;
 And stop this gap of breath with fulsome dust,
 And be a carrion monster like thyself.
 Come, grin on me ; and I will think thou smilest,
 And buss thee as thy wife ! Misery's love,
 O, come to me !

King Philip. O fair affliction, peace.

Constance. No, no, I will not, having breath to cry.
 O, that my tongue were in the thunder's mouth !
 Then with a passion would I shake the world ;
 And rouse from sleep that fell anatomy,
 Which cannot hear a feeble lady's voice,
 Which scorns a modern¹ invocation.

Pandolph. Lady, you utter madness, and not sorrow.

Constance. Thou art not holy to belie me so ;
 I am not mad : this hair I tear is mine ;
 My name is Constance ; I was Geoffrey's wife ;
 Young Arthur is my son, and he is lost :
 I am not mad ;—I would to Heaven I were !
 For then, 'tis like I should forget myself :
 O, if I could, what grief should I forget !—
 Preach some philosophy to make me mad,
 And thou shalt be canonized, cardinal ;
 For, being not mad, but sensible of grief,
 My reasonable part produces reason
 How I may be delivered of these woes,
 And teaches me to kill or hang myself.
 If I were mad, I should forget my son,
 Or madly think a babe of clouts were he.
 I am not mad ; too well, too well I feel
 The different plague of each calamity.

King Philip. Bind up those tresses. O, what love I
 note

In the fair multitude of those her hairs !
 Where but by chance a silver drop hath fallen,
 Even to that drop ten thousand wiry friends
 Do glue themselves in sociable grief ;

¹ Common.

Like true, inseparable, faithful loves,
Sticking together in calamity.

Constance. To England, if you will.

King Philip. Bind up your hairs.

Constance. Yes, that I will; and wherefore will I do it?

I tore them from their bonds; and cried aloud,

"O that these hands could so redeem my son,

As they have given these hairs their liberty!"

But now I envy at their liberty,

And will again commit them to their bonds,

Because my poor child is a prisoner.

And, father cardinal, I have heard you say,

That we shall see and know our friends in heaven:

If that be true, I shall see my boy again;

For, since the birth of Cain, the first male child,

To him that did but yesterday suspire,

There was not such a gracious creature born.

But now will canker sorrow eat my bud,

And chase the native beauty from his cheek;

And he will look as hollow as a ghost,

As dim and meagre as an ague's fit;

And so he'll die; and, rising so again,

When I shall meet him in the court of heaven

I shall not know him: therefore never, never

Must I behold my pretty Arthur more.

* * * *

Grief fills the room up of my absent child,

Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me;

Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,

Remembers me of all his gracious parts,

Stuffs out his vacant garments with his form:

Then have I reason to be fond of grief.

Fare you well: had you such a loss as I,

I could give better comfort than you do.

I will not keep this form upon my head, [*Tearing off her*

When there is such disorder in my wit. *head-dress.*

O Lord! my boy, my Arthur, my fair son!

My life, my joy, my food, my all the world!

My widow-comfort, and my sorrow's cure!

W. SHAKESPEARE.

160.

King John has ordered Hubert to burn out the eyes of his nephew, Arthur.

Enter HUBERT and ATTENDANTS.

Hubert. Heat me these irons hot ; and, look thou stand
Within the arras : when I strike my foot
Upon the bosom of the ground, rush forth,
And bind the boy, which you shall find with me,
Fast to the chair : be heedful : hence, and watch.

First Attendant. I hope your warrant will bear out the deed.

Hubert. Uncleanly scruples ! fear not you : look to 't.

[*Exeunt ATTENDANTS.*]

Young lad, come forth ; I have to say with you.

Enter ARTHUR.

Arthur. Good morrow, Hubert.

Hubert. Good morrow, little prince.

Arthur. As little prince, having so great a title
To be more prince, as may be.—You are sad.

Hubert. Indeed, I have been merrier.

Arthur. Mercy on me !

Methinks, no body should be sad but I :

Yet, I remember, when I was in France,
Young gentlemen would be as sad as night,
Only for wantonness. By my christendom,
So I were out of prison, and kept sheep,
I would be as merry as the day is long ;
And so I would be here, but that I doubt

My uncle practises more harm to me :

He is afraid of me, and I of him :

Is it my fault that I was Geffrey's son ?

No, indeed, is 't not ; and I would to heaven

I were your son, so you would love me, Hubert.

Hubert. (Aside.) If I talk to him, with his innocent prate

He will awake my mercy, which lies dead :

Therefore I will be sudden and despatch.

Arthur. Are you sick, Hubert ? you look pale to-day.

In sooth, I would you were a little sick,
That I might sit all night and watch with you.
warrant I love you more than you do me.

Hubert. (Aside.) His words do take possession of my bosom.

Read here, young Arthur. [*Showing a paper.*
(Aside.) How now, foolish rheum!

Turning spiteous torture out of door!

I must be brief; lest resolution drop

Out at mine eyes, in tender womanish tears.

Can you not read it? is it not fair writ?

Arthur. Too fairly, Hubert, for so foul effect:

Must you with hot irons burn out both mine eyes?

Hubert. Young boy, I must.

Arthur. And will you?

Hubert. And I will.

Arthur. Have you the heart? When your head did but ache,

I knit my handkerchief about your brows,

The best I had, a princess wrought it me,

And I did never ask it you again;

And with my hand at midnight held your head,

And like the watchful minutes to the hour,

Still and anon cheered up the heavy time,

Saying, "What lack you?" and, "Where lies your grief?"

Or, "What good love may I perform for you?"

Many a poor man's son would have lain still,

And ne'er have spoke a loving word to you;

But you at your sick service had a prince.

Nay, you may think my love was crafty love,

And call it cunning: do, an if you will:

If heaven be pleased that you will use me ill,

Why then you must. Will you put out mine eyes?—

These eyes that never did, nor never shall,

So much as frown on you?

Hubert. I have sworn to do it;

And with hot irons must I burn them out.

Arthur. Ah, none, but in this iron age, would do it!

The iron of itself, though heat red-hot,

Approaching near these eyes, would drink my tears,

And quench his fiery indignation,

Even in the matter of mine innocence;

Nay, after that, consume away in rust,

But for containing fire to harm mine eye.

Are you more stubborn hard than hammered iron?

An if an angel should have come to me,

And told me, Hubert should put out mine eyes,
I would not have believed him;—no tongue but Hubert's.

Hubert. Come forth. [*Stamps.*]

Re-enter ATTENDANTS, with a Cord, Irons, &c.

Do as I bid you do.

Arthur. O, save me, Hubert, save me! my eyes are out,
Even with the fierce looks of these bloody men.

Hubert. Give me the iron, I say, and bind him here.

Arthur. Alas, what need you be so boisterous rough?
I will not struggle, I will stand stone-still.

For heaven's sake, Hubert, let me not be bound!

Nay, hear me, Hubert, drive these men away,

And I will sit as quiet as a lamb;

I will not stir, nor wince, nor speak a word,

Nor look upon the iron angrily:

Thrust but these men away, and I'll forgive you,

Whatever torment you do put me to.

Hubert. Go, stand within; let me alone with him.

First Attendant. I am best pleased to be from such a
deed. [*Exeunt ATTENDANTS.*]

Arthur. Alas! I then have chid away my friend;

He hath a stern look, but a gentle heart,

Let him come back that his compassion may

Give life to yours.

Hubert. Come, boy, prepare yourself.

Arthur. Is there no remedy?

Hubert. None, but to lose your eyes.

Arthur. O heaven! that there were but a mote in yours,
A grain, a dust, a gnat, a wandering hair,

Any annoyance in that precious sense!

Then, feeling what small things are boisterous there,

Your vile intent must needs seem horrible.

Hubert. Is this your promise? go to, hold your tongue.

Arthur. Hubert, the utterance of a brace of tongues
Must needs want pleading for a pair of eyes.

Let me not hold my tongue, let me not, Hubert;

Or, Hubert, if you will, cut out my tongue,

So I may keep mine eyes. O, spare mine eyes,

Though to no use, but still to look on you!

Lo, by my troth, the instrument is cold

And would not harm me.

Hubert.

I can heat it, boy.

Arthur. No, in good sooth; the fire is dead with grief,
Being create for comfort, to be used
In undeserved extremes. See else yourself;
There is no malice in this burning coal;
The breath of heaven has blown his spirit out,
And strewed repentant ashes on his head.

Hubert. But with my breath I can revive it, boy.

Arthur. And if you do, you will but make it blush,
And glow with shame of your proceedings, Hubert;
Nay, it, perchance, will sparkle in your eyes;
And, like a dog that is compelled to fight,
Snatch at his master that doth tarre him on.
All things that you should use to do me wrong,
Deny their office: only you do lack
That mercy, which fierce fire, and iron extends,
Creatures of note for mercy-lacking uses.

Hubert. Well, see to live; I will not touch thine eyes
For all the treasure that thine uncle owes.
Yet am I sworn; and I did purpose, boy,
With this same very iron to burn them out.

Arthur. O, now you look like Hubert! all this while
You were disguised.

Hubert. Peace; no more. Adieu.
Your uncle must not know but you are dead;
I'll fill these doggèd spies with false reports:
And, pretty child, sleep doubtless and secure,
That Hubert, for the wealth of all the world,
Will not offend thee.

Arthur. O heaven! I thank you, Hubert.

Hubert. Silence; no more: go closely in with me:
Much danger do I undergo for thee. [*Exeunt.*]

W. SHAKESPEARE.

"Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly
make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven."—
(Prov. xxiii. 5.)

FALSE world, thou li'st: thou canst not lend
The least delight:
Thy favours cannot gain a friend,
They are so slight:
Thy morning pleasures make an end
To please at night:

Poor are the wants that thou supply'st ;
 And yet thou vaunt'st, and yet thou vi'st
 With heaven ; fond earth, thou boast'st ; false world, thou
 li'st.

Thy baffling tongue tells golden tales
 Of endless treasure :

Thy bounty offers easy sales
 Of lasting pleasure ;

Thou ask'st the conscience what she ails,
 And swear'st to ease her :

There's none can want where thou supply'st,
 There none can give where thou deny'st,
 Alas ! fond world, thou boast'st ; false world, thou li'st.

What well-advised ear regards
 What earth can say ?

Thy words are gold, but thy rewards
 Are painted clay :

Thy cunning can but pack the cards,
 Thou canst not play :

Thy game at weakest, still thou vi'st ;
 If seen, and then re-vied, deny'st ;
 Thou art not what thou seem'st ; false world, thou li'st.

Thy tinsel bosom seems a mint
 Of new-coined treasure,

A paradise, that has no stint,
 No change, no measure ;

A painted cask, but nothing in 't,
 Nor wealth, nor pleasure :

Vain earth ! that falsely thus comply'st
 With man ; vain man, that thou reli'st
 On earth ; vain man, thou doat'st ; vain earth, thou li'st.

What mean dull souls, in this high measure
 To haberdash

In earth's base waré, whose greatest treasure
 Is dross and trash ;

The height of whose enchanting pleasure
 Is but a flash ?

Are these the goods that thou supply'st
 Us mortals with ? are these the high'st ?
 Can these bring cordial peace ? false world, thou li'st.

F. QUARLES.

162.

Time Passes.

TIME is a feathered thing ;
And whilst I praise
The sparklings of thy looks, and call them rays,
Takes wing ;
Leaving behind him, as he flies,
An unperceivèd dimness in thine eyes.
His minutes, whilst they're told,
Do make us old,
And every sand of his fleet glass,
Increasing age as it doth pass,
Insensibly sows wrinkles there,
Where flowers and roses did appear.
Whilst we do speak, our fire
Doth into ice expire ;
Flames turn to frost,
And ere we can
Know how our crow turns swan,
Or how a silver snow
Springs there where jet did grow,
Our fading spring is in dull winter lost.

J. MAYNE.

163.

Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

So hand in hand they passed, the loveliest pair
That ever since in love's embraces met—
Adam the goodliest man of men since born
His sons ; the fairest of her daughters Eve.
Under a tuft of shade that on a green
Stood whispering soft, by a fresh fountain-side,
They sat them down ; and after no more toil
Of their sweet gardening labour than sufficed
To recommend cool Zephyr, and make ease
More easy, wholesome thirst and appetite
More grateful, to their supper-fruits they fell—
Nectarine fruits, which the compliant boughs
Yielded them, sidelong as they sat reclined
On the soft downy bank damasked with flowers.

The savoury pulp they chew, and in the rind,
 Still as they thirsted, scoop the brimming stream ;
 Nor gentle purpose, nor endearing smiles
 Wanted, nor youthful dalliance, as beseems
 Fair couple linked in happy nuptial league,
 Alone as they. About them frisking played
 All beasts of the earth, since wild, and of all chase
 In wood or wilderness, forest or den.
 Sporting the lion ramped, and in his paw
 Dandled the kid ; bears, tigers, ounces, pards,
 Gambolled before them ; the unwieldy elephant,
 To make them mirth, used all his might, and wreathed
 His lithe proboscis ; close the serpent sly,
 Insinuating, wove with Gordian twine
 His braided train, and of his fatal guile
 Gave proof unheeded. Others on the grass
 Couched, and, now filled with pasture, gazing sat,
 Or bedward ruminating ; for the sun,
 Declined, was hastening now with prone career
 To the Ocean Isles, and in the ascending scale
 Of Heaven the stars that usher evening rose.

J. MILTON.

164.

Eve relates to Adam her First Experiences, and her Meeting with Himself.

“ THAT day I oft remember, when from sleep
 I first awaked, and found myself reposed,
 Under a shade, on flowers, much wondering where
 And what I was, whence thither brought, and how.
 Not distant far from thence a murmuring sound
 Of waters issued from a cave, and spread
 Into a liquid plain ; then stood unmoved,
 Pure as the expanse of Heaven. I thither went
 With unexperienced thought, and laid me down
 On the green bank, to look into the clear
 Smooth lake, that to me seemed another sky.
 As I bent down to look, just opposite
 A shape within the watery gleam appeared,
 Bending to look on me. I started back,
 It started back ; but pleased I soon returned,
 Pleased it returned as soon with answering looks

Of sympathy and love. There I had fixed
Mine eyes till now, and pined with vain desire,
Had not a voice thus warned me: 'What thou seest,
What there thou seest, fair creature, is thyself;
With thee it came and goes: but follow me,
And I will bring thee where no shadow stays
Thy coming, and thy soft embraces—he
Whose image thou art; him thou shalt enjoy
Inseparably thine; to him shalt bear
Multitudes like thyself, and thence be called
Mother of human race.' What could I do,
But follow straight, invisibly thus led?
Till I espied thee, fair indeed, and tall,
Under a platane; yet methought less fair,
Less winning soft, less amiably mild,
Than that smooth watery image. Back I turned;
Thou, following, cried'st aloud, 'Return, fair Eve;
Whom fliest thou? Whom thou fliest, of him thou art,
His flesh, his bone; to give thee being I lent
Out of my side to thee, nearest my heart,
Substantial life, to have thee by my side
Henceforth an individual solace dear:
Part of my soul I seek thee, and thee claim
My other half.' With that thy gentle hand
Seized mine; I yielded, and from that time see
How beauty is excelled by manly grace
And wisdom, which alone is truly fair."

J. MILTON.

165.

Upon Adam's terrible reproaches to her, for her sin, Eve throws herself at his feet, and implores him not to abandon her.

"FORSAKE me not thus, Adam! witness Heaven
What love sincere and reverence in my heart
I bear thee, and unweeting have offended,
Unhappily deceived! Thy suppliant
I beg, and clasp thy knees; bereave me not
Whereon I live, thy gentle looks, thy aid,
Thy counsel in this uttermost distress,
My only strength and stay. Forlorn of thee,
Whither shall I betake me, where subsist?
While yet we live, scarce one short hour perhaps,

Between us two let there be peace ; both joining,
 As joined in injuries, one enmity
 Against a foe by doom express assigned us,
 That cruel Serpent. On me exercise not
 Thy hatred for this misery befallen—
 On me already lost, me than thyself
 More miserable. Both have sinned ; but thou
 Against God only ; I against God and thee,
 And to the place of judgment will return,
 There with my cries importune Heaven, that all
 The sentence, from thy head removed, may light
 On me, sole cause to thee of all this woe,
 Me, me only, just object of His ire."

She ended, weeping ; and her lowly plight,
 Immovable till peace obtained from fault
 Acknowledged and deplored, in Adam wrought
 Commiseration. Soon his heart relented
 Towards her, his life so late, and sole delight,
 Now at his feet submissive in distress—
 Creature so fair his reconciliation seeking,
 His counsel whom she had displeased, his aid.
 As one disarmed, his anger all he lost,
 And thus with peaceful words upraised her soon :—

"Unwary, and too desirous, as before
 So now, of what thou know'st not, who desir'st
 The punishment all on thyself ! Alas !
 Bear thine own first, ill able to sustain
 His full wrath whose thou feel'st as yet least part,
 And my displeasure bear'st so ill. If prayers
 Could alter high decrees, I to that place
 Would speed before thee, and be louder heard,
 That on my head all might be visited,
 Thy frailty and infirmer sex forgiven,
 To me committed, and by me exposed.
 But rise ; let us no more contend, nor blame
 Each other, blamed enough elsewhere, but strive
 In offices of love how we may lighten
 Each other's burden in our share of woe ;
 Since this day's death denounced, if aught I see,
 Will prove no sudden, but a slow paced evil,
 A long day's dying, to augment our pain,
 And to our seed (O hapless seed !) derived."

J. MILTON.

166.

Death's Mastery.

MAN'S life was spacious in the early world :
It paused, like some slow ship with sail unfurled
Waiting in seas by scarce a wavelet curled ;
Beheld the slow star-paces of the skies,
And grew from strength to strength through centuries ;
Saw infant trees fill out their giant limbs,
And heard a thousand times the sweet birds' marriage
hymns.

In Cain's young city none had heard of Death
Save him, the founder ; and it was his faith
That here, away from harsh Jehovah's law,
Man was immortal, since no halt or flaw
In Cain's own frame betrayed six hundred years,
But dark as pines that autumn never sears
His locks thronged backward as he ran, his frame
Rose like the orbèd sun each morn the same,
Lake-mirrored to his gaze ; and that red brand,
The scorching impress of Jehovah's hand,
Was still clear-edged to his unwearied eye,
Its secret firm in time-fraught memory.
He said, " My happy offspring shall not know
That the red life from out a man may flow
When smitten by his brother." True, his race
Bore each one stamped upon his new-born face
A copy of the brand no whit less clear ;
But every mother held that little copy dear.

Thus generations in glad idlesse throve,
Nor hunted prey, nor with each other strove ;
For clearest springs were plenteous in the land,
And gourds for cups ; the ripe fruits sought the hand,
Bending the laden boughs with fragrant gold ;
And for their roofs and garments wealth untold
Lay everywhere in grasses and broad leaves :
They laboured gently, as a maid who weaves
Her hair in mimic mats, and pauses oft
And strokes across her hand the tresses soft,

Then peeps to watch the poisèd butterfly,
 Or little burthened ants that homeward hie.
 Time was but leisure to their lingering thought,
 There was no need for haste to finish aught ;
 But sweet beginnings were repeated still
 Like infant babblings that no task fulfil ;
 For love, that loved not change, constrained the simple
 will.

Till, hurling stones in mere athletic joy,
 Strong Lamech struck and killed his fairest boy,
 And tried to wake him with the tenderest cries,
 And fetched and held before the glazed eyes
 The things they best had loved to look upon ;
 But never glance or smile or sigh he won.
 The generations stood around those twain
 Helplessly gazing, till their father Cain
 Parted the press, and said, " He will not wake ;
 This is the endless sleep, and we must make
 A bed deep down for him beneath the sod ;
 For know, my sons, there is a mighty God
 Angry with all man's race, but most with me.
 I fled from out his land in vain !—'tis He
 Who came and slew the lad, for he has found
 This home of ours, and we shall all be bound
 By the harsh bands of his most cruel will,
 Which any moment may some dear one kill.
 Nay, though we live for countless moons, at last
 We and all ours shall die like summers past.
 This is Jehovah's will, and he is strong.
 I thought the way I travelled was too long
 For Him to follow me : my thought was vain !
 He walks unseen, but leaves a track of pain,
 Pale Death His foot-print is, and he will come again !"

And a new spirit from that hour came o'er
 The race of Cain : soft idlesse was no more,
 But even the sunshine had a heart of care,
 Smiling with hidden dread—a mother fair
 Who folding to her breast a dying child
 Beams with feigned joy that but makes sadness mild.
 Death was now lord of life, and at his word
 Time, vague as air before, new terrors stirred,

With measured wing now audibly arose
Throbbing through all things to some unknown close.
Now glad Content by clutching Haste was torn,
And Work grew eager, and Device was born.
It seemed the light was never loved before,
Now each man said, "'Twill go and come no more."
No budding branch, no pebble from the brook,
No form, no shadow, but new dearness took
From the one thought that life must have an end ;
And the last parting now began to send
Diffusive dread through love and wedded bliss,
Thrilling them into finer tenderness.
Then memory disclosed her face divine,
That like the calm nocturnal lights doth shine
Within the soul, and shows the sacred graves,
And shows the presence that no sunlight craves,
No space, no warmth, but moves among them all ;
Gone and yet here, and coming at each call,
With ready voice and eyes that understand,
And lips that ask a kiss, and dear responsive hand.
Thus to Cain's race death was tear-watered seed
Of various life and action-shaping need.
But chief the sons of Lamech felt the stings
Of new ambition, and the force that springs
In passion beating on the shores of fate.
They said, " There comes a night when all too late
The mind shall long to prompt the achieving hand,
The eager thought behind closed portals stand,
And the last wishes to the mute lips press
Buried ere death in silent helplessness.
Then while the soul its way with sound can cleave,
And while the arm is strong to strike and heave,
Let soul and arm give shape that will abide
And rule above our graves, and power divide
With that great god of day, whose rays must bend
As we shall make the moving shadows tend.
Come, let us fashion acts that are to be,
When we shall lie in darkness silently,
As our young brother doth, whom yet we see
Fallen and slain, but reigning in our will
By that one image of him pale and still."

GEORGE ELIOT.

167.

Death.

DEATH is here and death is there,
Death is busy everywhere,
All around, within, beneath,
Above is death—and we are death.

Death has set his mark and seal
On all we are and all we feel,
On all we know and all we fear,

* * * *

First our pleasures die—and then
Our hopes, and then our fears—and when
These are dead, the debt is due,
Dust claims dust—and we die too.

All things that we love and cherish,
Like ourselves must fade and perish,
Such is our rude mortal lot—
Love itself would, did they not.

P. B. SHELLEY.

168.

Ode on a Grecian Urn.

THOU still unravished bride of quietness !
Thou foster-child of Silence and slow Time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme :
What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe¹ or the dales of Arcady?²
What men or gods are these? What maidens loath?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

¹ A delightful valley in Thessaly.

² A country of Peloponnesus, inhabited chiefly by shepherds. Pan, the god of shepherds, lived there.

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter ; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on ;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endeared,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone :
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare ;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve ;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair !

Ah, happy, happy boughs ! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu ;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
For ever piping songs for ever new ;
More happy love ! more happy, happy love !
For ever warm and still to be enjoyed,
For ever panting and for ever young ;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high, sorrowful, and cloyed,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice ?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest ?
What little town by river or sea-shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of its folk, this pious morn ?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be ; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape ! Fair attitude ! with breed
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed ;
Thou, silent form ! dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity : Cold Pastoral !
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

J. KEATS.

169.

I STOOD in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs ;¹
 A palace and a prison on each hand :
 I saw from out the wave her structures rise
 As from the stroke of the enchanter's wand :
 A thousand years their cloudy wings expand
 Around me, and a dying Glory smiles
 O'er the far times, when many a subject land
 Looked to the wingèd² Lion's marble piles,
 Where Venice sate in state, throned on her hundred isles !

She looks a sea Cybele,³ fresh from ocean,
 Rising with her tiara of proud towers
 At airy distance, with majestic motion,
 A ruler of the waters and their powers ;
 And such she was ;—her daughters had their dowers
 From spoils of nations, and the exhaustless East
 Poured in her lap all gems in sparkling showers.
 In purple was she robed, and of her feast
 Monarchs partook, and deemed their dignity increased.

In Venice Tasso's⁴ echoes are no more,
 And silent rows the songless gondolier ;
 Her palaces are crumbling to the shore,
 And music meets not always now the ear :
 Those days are gone—but Beauty still is here.
 States fall, arts fade—but Nature doth not die,
 Nor yet forget how Venice once was dear,
 The pleasant place of all festivity,
 The revel of the earth, the masque of Italy !

But unto us she hath a spell beyond
 Her name in story, and her long array,
 Of mighty shadows, whose dim forms despond
 Above the dogeless city's vanished sway ;

¹ This bridge leads from the ducal palace to the prisons of Venice. Prisoners used to be led across it to hear their sentence, and were then executed. Hence its name.

² The lion of St. Mark, the patron saint of Venice.

³ A goddess whose head was crowned with rising turrets.

⁴ The gondoliers used to sing stanzas from Tasso's "Jerusalem."

Ours is a trophy which will not decay
With the Rialto ; Shylock and the Moor,
And Pierre, cannot be swept or worn away—
The keystones of the arch ! though all were o'er,
For us re-peopled were the solitary shore.

The beings of the mind are not of clay ;
Essentially immortal, they create
And multiply in us a brighter ray
And more beloved existence : that which Fate
Prohibits to dull life, in this our state
Of mortal bondage, by these spirits supplied,
First exiles, then replaces what we hate ;
Watering the heart whose early flowers have died,
And with a fresher growth replenishing the void.

* * * * *

I can re-people with the past—and of
The present there is still for eye and thought,
And meditation chastened down, enough ;
And more, it may be, than I hoped or sought ;
And of the happiest moments which were wrought
Within the web of my existence, some
From thee, fair Venice ! have their colours caught :
There are some feelings Time cannot benumb,
Nor Torture shake, or mine would now be cold and dumb.

But from their nature will the tannen¹ grow
Loftiest on loftiest and least sheltered rocks,
Rooted in barrenness, where nought below
Of soil supports them 'gainst the Alpine shocks
Of eddying storms ; yet springs the trunk, and mocks
The howling tempest, till its height and frame
Are worthy of the mountains from whose blocks
Of bleak, gray granite into life it came,
And grew a giant tree ;—the mind may grow the same.

* * * * *

Oh Rome ! my country ! city of the soul !
The orphans of the heart must turn to thee,
Lone mother of dead empires ! and control
In their shut breasts their petty misery.

¹ Fir-trees.

What are our woes and sufferance? Come and see
 The cypress, hear the owl, and plod your way
 O'er steps of broken thrones and temples, ye!
 Whose agonies are evils of a day—
 A world is at our feet as fragile as our clay.

The Niobe¹ of nations! there she stands,
 Childless and crownless, in her voiceless woe;
 An empty urn within her withered hands,
 Whose holy dust was scattered long ago;
 The Scipios'² tomb contains no ashes now;
 The very sepulchres lie tenantless
 Of their heroic dwellers: dost thou flow,
 Old Tiber! through a marble wilderness?
 Rise, with thy yellow waves, and mantle her distress.

The Goth, the Christian, Time, War, Flood, and Fire,
 Have dealt upon the seven-hilled city's pride;
 She saw her glories star by star expire,
 And up the steep barbarian monarchs ride,
 Where the car climbed the capitol; far and wide
 Temple and tower went down, nor left a site:—
 Chaos of ruins! who shall trace the void,
 O'er the dim fragments cast a lunar light,
 And say, "Here was, or is," where all is doubly night?

The double night of ages, and of her,
 Night's daughter, Ignorance, hath wrapt and wrap
 All round us; we but feel our way to err:
 The ocean hath his chart, the stars their map,
 And Knowledge spreads them on her ample lap;
 But Rome is as the desert, where we steer
 Stumbling o'er recollections; now we clap
 Our hands, and cry "Eureka!" it is clear—
 When but some false mirage of ruin rises near.

Alas! the lofty city! and alas!
 The trebly hundred triumphs! and the day
 When Brutus made the dagger's edge surpass
 The conqueror's sword in bearing fame away!

¹ Through her overweening pride in her children (said to number twenty), Niobe incurred the wrath of Latona, who caused them all to be destroyed by her own son and daughter, Apollo and Diana.

² A celebrated Roman family who obtained the greatest honours in the Republic. Its members distinguished themselves during many generations.

Alas, for Tully's voice, and Virgil's lay,
And Livy's pictured page !—but these shall be
Her resurrection ; all beside—decay.
Alas, for earth, for never shall we see
That brightness in her eye she bore when Rome was free !

* * * * *

Egeria !¹ sweet creation of some heart
Which found no mortal resting-place so fair
As thine ideal breast ; whate'er thou art
Or wert,—a young Aurora of the air,
The nympholepsy of some fond despair ;
Or, it might be, a beauty of the earth,
Who found a more than common votary there
Too much adoring ; whatsoe'er thy birth,
Thou wert a beautiful thought, and softly bodied forth.

The mosses of thy fountain still are sprinkled
With thine Elysian water-drops ; the face
Of thy cave-guarded spring, with years un wrinkled,
Reflects the meek-eyed genius of the place,
Whose green, wild margin now no more erase
Art's works ; nor must the delicate waters sleep,
Prisoned in marble, bubbling from the base
Of the cleft statue, with a gentle leap
The rill runs o'er, and round, fern, flowers, and ivy creep

Fantastically tangled ; the green hills
Are clothed with early blossoms ; through the grass
The quick-eyed lizard rustles, and the bills
Of summer-birds sing welcome as ye pass ;
Flowers fresh in hue, and many in their class,
Implore the pausing step, and with their dyes
Dance in the soft breeze in a fairy mass ;
The sweetness of the violet's deep blue eyes,
Kissed by the breath of heaven, seems coloured by its skies.

* * * * *

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean—roll !
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain ;
Man marks the earth with ruin—his control
Stops with the shore ;—upon the watery plain

¹ A nymph inhabiting a famous grove near Rome. She was, by some, supposed to have become the wife of the king Numa, the successor of Romulus.

The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
 A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
 When, for a moment, like a drop of rain,
 He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan,
 Without a grave, unknelled, uncoffined, and unknown.

His steps are not upon thy paths,—thy fields
 Are not a spoil for him,—thou dost arise
 And shake him from thee; the vile strength he wields
 For earth's destruction thou dost all despise,
 Spurning him from thy bosom to the skies,
 And send'st him, shivering in thy playful spray
 And howling, to his gods, where haply lies
 His petty hope in some near port or bay,
 And dashest him again to earth:—there let him lay.

The armaments which thunderstrike the walls
 Of rock-built cities, bidding nations quake,
 And monarchs tremble in their capitals,
 The oak leviathans, whose huge ribs make
 Their clay creator the vain title take
 Of lord of thee, and arbiter of war;
 These are thy toys, and, as the snowy flake,
 They melt into thy yeast of waves, which mar
 Alike the Armada's¹ pride, or spoils of Trafalgar.²

Thy shores are empires, changed in all save thee—
 Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what are they?
 Thy waters wasted them while they were free,
 And many a tyrant since; their shores obey
 The stranger slave, or savage; their decay
 Has dried up realms to deserts:—not so thou,
 Unchangeable save to thy wild waves' play—
 Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow—
 Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now.

Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form
 Glasses itself in tempests; in all time,
 Calm or convulsed—in breeze, or gale, or storm,
 Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime

¹ A mighty armament prepared, by Spain, for the invasion of England, during the reign of Elizabeth (1588).

² A great naval victory, in which Nelson perished, won by the English (1805), against the united fleets of France and Spain.

Dark-heaving ;—boundless, endless, and sublime—
The image of Eternity—the throne
Of the Invisible ; even from out thy slime
The monsters of the deep are made ; each zone
Obeys thee ; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone.

LORD BYRON.

170.

Ode to the West Wind.

I.

O, WILD West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes : O, thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odours plain and hill :

Wild spirit, which art moving everywhere ;
Destroyer and preserver ; hear, O, hear !

II.

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning : there are spread
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Mænad,¹ even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height,
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

¹ A name of the priestesses of Bacchus, the god of wine and drinkers.

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst : O, hear !

III.

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiæ's¹ bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them ! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow grey with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves : O, hear !

IV.

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear ;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee ;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O, uncontrollable ! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
Scarce seemed a vision ; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh ! lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud !
I fall upon the thorns of life ! I bleed !

¹ A city near the sea on the west coast of Italy.

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee : tameless, and swift, and proud.

V.

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is :
What if my leaves are falling like its own !
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet thought in sadness. Be thou, spirit fierce,
My spirit ! Be thou me, impetuous one !

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth !
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth,
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind !
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy ! O, wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind ?

P. B. SHELLEY.

171.

Prometheus' Defiance of Jupiter.

Prometheus having, by a series of acts, incurred the severe wrath of Jupiter, the king of the gods, was chained to a rock on Mount Caucasus, and left to hang there. To increase his punishment, a vulture was sent every day to feed upon his liver, which was never suffered to diminish, though it was constantly devoured.

MONARCH of gods and dæmons, and all spirits
But One, who throng those bright and rolling worlds
Which Thou and I alone of living things
Behold with sleepless eyes ! regard this earth
Made multitudinous with thy slaves, whom thou
Requiest for knee-worship, prayer, and praise,
And toil, and hecatombs of broken hearts,
With fear and self-contempt and barren hope.
Whilst me, who am thy foe, eyeless in hate,
Hast thou made reign and triumph, to thy scorn,
O'er mine own misery and thy vain revenge.
Three thousand years of sleep-unsheltered hours,

And moments aye divided by keen pangs
 Till they seemed years, torture and solitude,
 Scorn and despair,—these are mine empire.
 More glorious far than that which thou surveyest
 From thine unenvied throne, O, mighty God !
 Almighty, had I deigned to share the shame
 Of thine ill tyranny, and hung not here
 Nailed to this wall of eagle-baffling mountain,
 Black, wintry, dead, unmeasured ; without herb,
 Insect, or beast, or shape or sound of life.
 Ah, me ! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever !

No change, no pause, no hope ! yet I endure.
 I ask the earth, have not the mountains felt ?
 I ask yon Heaven, the all-beholding Sun,
 Has it not seen ? The sea, in storm or calm,
 Heaven's ever-changing shadow, spread below,
 Have its deaf waves not heard my agony ?
 Ah, me ! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever !

The crawling glaciers pierce me with the spears
 Of their moon-freezing crystals ; the bright chains
 Eat with their burning cold into my bones.
 Heaven's wingèd hound, polluting from thy lips
 His beak in poison not his own, tears up
 My heart ; and shapeless sights come wandering by,
 The ghastly people of the realm of dream,
 Mocking me : and the earthquake-fiends are charged
 To wrench the rivets from my quivering wounds
 When the rocks split and close again behind :
 While from their loud abysses howling throng
 The genii of the storm, urging the rage
 Of whirlwind, and afflict me with keen hail.
 And yet to me welcome is day and night,
 Whether one breaks the hoar frost of the morn,
 Or starry, dim, and slow, the other climbs
 The leaden-coloured East ; for then they lead
 The wingless, crawling hours, one among whom—
 As some dark Priest hales the reluctant victim—
 Shall drag thee, cruel King, to kiss the blood
 From these pale feet, which then might trample thee
 If they disdained not such a prostrate slave.
 Disdain ! Ah, no ! I pity thee.

P. B. SHELLEY.

172.

Satan's Address to the Sun.

"O THOU that, with surpassing glory crowned,
Look'st from thy sole dominion like the god
Of this new World—at whose sight all the stars
Hide their diminished heads—to thee I call,
But with no friendly voice, and add thy name,
O Sun, to tell thee how I hate thy beams,
That bring to my remembrance from what state
I fell, how glorious once above thy sphere,
Till pride and worse ambition threw me down,
Warring in Heaven against Heaven's matchless King!
Ah, wherefore? He deserved no such return
From me, whom he created what I was
In that bright eminence, and with his good
Upbraided none; nor was his service hard.
What could be less than to afford him praise,
The easiest recompense, and pay him thanks,
How due? Yet all his good proved ill in me,
And wrought but malice. Lifted up so high,
I 'sdained subjection, and thought one step higher
Would set me highest, and in a moment quit
The debt immense of endless gratitude,
So burdensome, still paying, still to owe;
Forgetful what from him I still received;
And understood not that a grateful mind
By owing owes not, but still pays, at once
Indebted and discharged—what burden then?
Oh, had his powerful destiny ordained
Me some inferior Angel, I had stood
Then happy; no unbounded hope had raised
Ambition. Yet why not? Some other Power
As great might have aspired, and me, though mean,
Drawn to his part. But other Powers as great
Fell not, but stand unshaken, from within
Or from without to all temptations armed!
Hadst thou the same free will and power to stand?
Thou hadst. Whom hast thou then, or what, to accuse,
But Heaven's free love dealt equally to all?
Be then his love accursed, since, love or hate,
To me alike it deals eternal woe.
Nay, cursed be thou; since against his thy will

Chose freely what it now so justly rues.
 Me miserable ! which way shall I fly
 Infinite wrath and infinite despair ?
 Which way I fly is Hell ; myself am Hell ;
 And, in the lowest deep, a lower deep
 Still threatening to devour me opens wide,
 To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heaven.
 O, then, at last relent ! Is there no place
 Left for repentance, none for pardon left ?
 None left but by submission ; and that word
 Disdain forbids me, and my dread of shame
 Among the Spirits beneath, whom I seduced
 With other promises and other vaunts
 Than to submit, boasting I could subdue
 The Omnipotent. Ay, me ! they little know
 How dearly I abide that boast so vain,
 Under what torments inwardly I groan.
 While they adore me on the throne of Hell,
 With diadem and sceptre high advanced,
 The lower still I fall, only supreme
 In misery : such joy ambition finds !
 But say I could repent, and could obtain,
 By act of grace, my former state ; how soon
 Would height recall high thoughts, how soon unsay
 What feigned submission swore ! Ease would recant
 Vows made in pain, as violent and void
 (For never can true reconciliation grow
 Where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep) ;
 Which would but lead me to a worse relapse
 And heavier fall : so should I purchase dear
 Short intermission, bought with double smart.
 This knows my Punisher ; therefore as far
 From granting he, as I from begging, peace.
 All hope excluded thus, behold, instead
 Of us, outcast, exiled, his new delight,
 Mankind, created, and for him this World !
 So farewell hope, and with hope, farewell fear,
 Farewell remorse ! All good to me is lost ;
 Evil, be thou my Good : by thee at least
 Divided empire with Heaven's King I hold,
 By thee, and more than half perhaps will reign ;
 As man ere long, and this new World, shall know."

J. MILTON.

173.

A Messenger describes to Manoa the end of his son, Samson.

"Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice : for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand. . . . And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport . . . and they set him between the pillars. . . . And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left. And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might ; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein."

Messenger. Occasions drew me early to this city ;
And, as the gates I entered with sunrise,
The morning trumpets festival proclaimed
Through each high street. Little I had dispatched,
When all abroad was rumoured that this day
Samson should be brought forth, to show the people
Proof of his mighty strength in feats and games.
I sorrowed at his captive state, but minded
Not to be absent at that spectacle.
The building was a spacious theatre,
Half round on two main pillars vaulted high,
With seats where all the lords, and each degree
Of sort, might sit in order to behold ;
The other side was open, where the throng
On banks and scaffolds under sky might stand :
I among these aloof obscurely stood.
The feast and noon grew high, and sacrifice
Had filled their hearts with mirth, high cheer, and wine,
When to their sports they turned. Immediately
Was Samson as a public servant brought,
In their state livery clad : before him pipes
And timbrels ; on each side went armed guards ;
Both horse and foot before him and behind,
Archers and slingers, cataphracts, and spears.
At sight of him the people with a shout
Rifted the air, clamouring their god with praise,
Who had made their dreadful enemy their thrall.
He patient, but undaunted, where they led him,
Came to the place ; and what was set before him,
Which without help of eye might be assayed,

To heave, pull, draw, or break, he still performed
 All with incredible, stupendous force,
 None daring to appear antagonist.

At length, for intermission' sake, they led him
 Between the pillars ; he his guide requested
 (For so from such as nearer stood we heard)
 As over-tired to let him lean awhile
 With both his arms on those two massy pillars,
 That to the archèd roof gave main support.
 He unsuspecting led him ; which when Samson
 Felt in his arms, with head awhile inclined,
 And eyes fast fixed, he stood, as one who prayed,
 Or some great matter in his mind revolved :
 At last, with head erect, thus cried aloud :—

“ Hitherto, Lords, what your commands imposed
 I have performed, as reason was, obeying,
 Not without wonder or delight beheld ;
 Now, of my own accord, such other trial
 I mean to show you of my strength yet greater
 As with amaze shall strike all who behold.”
 This uttered, straining all his nerves, he bowed ;
 As with the force of winds and waters pent
 When mountains tremble, those two massy pillars
 With horrible convulsion to and fro
 He tugged, he shook, till down they came, and drew
 The whole roof after them with burst of thunder
 Upon the heads of all who sat beneath,
 Lords, ladies, captains, counsellors, or priests,
 Their choice nobility and flower, not only
 Of this, but each Philistian city round,
 Met from all parts to solemnize this feast.
 Samson with these immixed, inevitably
 Pulled down the same destruction on himself :
 The vulgar only 'scaped, who stood without.

J. MILTON.

174.

Hassan describes some incident of the warfare between the Turks and Greeks, about the year 1821.

Hassan. One half the Grecian army made a bridge
Of safe and slow retreat, with Moslem dead ;

The other—

Mahmud. Speak—tremble not.—

Hassan. Islanded

By victor myriads, formed in hollow square
With rough and steadfast front, and thrice flung back
The deluge of our foaming cavalry ;
Thrice their keen wedge of battle pierced our lines.
Our baffled army trembled like one man
Before a host, and gave them space ; but soon,
From the surrounding hills, the batteries blazed,
Kneading them down with fire and iron rain :
Yet none approached ; till, like a field of corn
Under the hook of the swart sickleman,
The band, intrenched in mounds of Turkish dead,
Grew weak and few.—Then said the Pacha, “ Slaves,
Render yourselves—they have abandoned you—
What hope of refuge, or retreat, or aid ?
We grant your lives.” “ Grant that which is thine own ! ”
Cried one, and fell upon his sword and died !
Another—“ God, and man, and hope abandon me ;
But I to them, and to myself, remain
Constant ! ”—he bowed his head, and his heart burst.
A third exclaimed, “ There is a refuge, tyrant,
Where thou dar’st not pursue, and canst not harm,
Should’st thou pursue ; there we shall meet again.”
Then held his breath, and, after a brief spasm,
The indignant spirit cast its mortal garment
Among the slain—dead earth upon the earth !
So these survivors, each by different ways,
Some strange, all sudden, none dishonourable,
Met in triumphant death ; and when our army
Closed in, while yet wonder, and awe, and shame,
Held back the base hyenas of the battle
That feed upon the dead and fly the living,
One rose out of the chaos of the slain :
And if it were a corpse which some dread spirit

Of the old saviours of the land we rule
 Had lifted in its anger wandering by ;—
 Or if there burned within the dying man
 Unquenchable disdain of death, and faith
 Creating what it feigned ;—I cannot tell—
 But he cried, "Phantoms of the free, we come !
 Armies of the Eternal, ye who strike
 To dust the citadels of sanguine kings,
 And shake the souls throned on their stony hearts,
 And thaw their frostwork diadems like dew ;—
 O ye who float around this clime, and weave
 The garment of the glory which it wears,
 Whose fame, though earth betray the dust it clasped,—
 Lies sepulchred in monumental thought ;—
 Progenitors of all that yet is great,
 Ascribe to your bright senate, O accept
 In your high ministrations, us, your sons—
 Us first, and the more glorious yet to come !
 And ye, weak conquerors ! giants who look pale
 When the crushed worm rebels beneath your tread,
 The vultures and the dogs, your pensioners tame,
 Are over-gorged ; but, like oppressors, still
 They crave the relic of Destruction's feast.
 The exhalations and the thirsty winds
 Are sick with blood ; the dew is foul with death ;
 Heaven's light is quenched in slaughter : thus, where'er
 Upon your camps, cities, or towers, or fleets,
 The obscene birds the reeking remnants cast
 Of these dead limbs,—upon your streams and mountains,
 Upon your fields, your gardens, and your house-tops,
 Where'er the winds shall creep, or the clouds fly,
 Or the dews fall, or the angry sun look down
 With poisoned light—Famine and Pestilence,
 And Panic, shall wage war upon our side !
 Nature from all her boundaries is moved
 Against ye : Time has found ye light as foam."

P. B. SHELLEY.

175.

Prospice.

FEAR death?—to feel the fog in my throat,
The mist in my face,
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
I am nearing the place,
The power of the night, the press of the storm,
The post of the foe ;
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form,
Yet the strong man must go :
For the journey is done and the summit attained,
And the barriers fall,
Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon be gained,
The reward of it all.
I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,
The best and the last !
I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forbore,
And bade me creep past.
No ! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers
The heroes of old,
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears
Of pain, darkness, and cold.
For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,
The black minute's at end,
And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices that rave,
Shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain,
Then a light, then thy breast,
O thou soul of my soul ! I shall clasp thee again,
And with God be the rest !

R. BROWNING.

176.

Song.

RARELY, rarely, comest thou,
Spirit of Delight !
Wherefore hast thou left me now
Many a day and night ?
Many a weary night and day
'Tis since thou art fled away.

How shall ever one like me
 Win thee back again?
 With the joyous and the free
 Thou wilt scoff at pain.
 Spirit false! thou hast forgot
 All but those who need thee not.

As a lizard with the shade
 Of a trembling leaf,
 Thou with sorrow art dismayed;
 Even the sighs of grief
 Reproach thee, that thou art not near,
 And reproach thou wilt not hear.

Let me set my mournful ditty
 To a merry measure,
 Thou wilt never come for pity,
 Thou wilt come for pleasure.
 Pity then will cut away
 Those cruel wings, and thou wilt stay.

I love all that thou lovest,
 Spirit of Delight!
 The fresh earth in new leaves drest,
 And the starry night;
 Autumn evening, and the morn
 When the golden mists are born.

I love snow, and all the forms
 Of the radiant frost;
 I love waves, and winds, and storms,
 Everything almost
 Which is Nature's, and may be
 Untainted by man's misery.

I love tranquil solitude,
 And such society
 As is quiet, wise, and good;
 Between thee and me
 What difference? but thou dost possess
 The things I seek, not love them less.

I love Love—though he has wings,
And like light can flee,
But above all other things,
Spirit, I love thee—
Thou art love and life! O come,
Make once more my heart thy home.
P. B. SHELLEY.

177.

Fancy.

EVER let the Fancy roam,
Pleasure never is at home:
At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth,
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth;
Then let wingèd Fancy wander
Through the thought still spread beyond her:
Open wide the mind's cage door,
She'll dart forth, and cloudward soar.
O sweet Fancy! let her loose;
Summer's joys are spoilt by use,
And the enjoying of the spring
Fades as does its blossoming:
Autumn's red-lipped fruitage too,
Blushing through the mist and dew,
Cloy with tasting: What do then?
Sit thee by the ingle, when
The sear faggot blazes bright,
Spirit of a winter's night;
When the soundless earth is muffled,
And the cakèd snow is shuffled
From the ploughboy's heavy shoon;
When the Night doth meet the Noon
In a dark conspiracy
To banish even from her sky.
Sit thee there, and send abroad,
With a mind self-overawed,
Fancy high-commissioned: send her!
She has vassals to attend her:
She will bring, in spite of frost,
Beauties that the earth hath lost;

She will bring thee, all together,
All delights of summer weather;
All the buds and bells of May,
From dewy sward or thorny spray;
All the heapèd Autumn's wealth,
With a still, mysterious stealth:
She will mix these pleasures up
Like three fit wines in a cup,
And thou shalt quaff it:—thou shalt hear
Distant harvest-carols clear;
Rustle of the reapèd corn;
Sweet birds antheming the morn:
And, in the same moment—hark!
'Tis the early April lark,
Or the rooks, with busy caw,
Foraging for sticks and straw.
Thou shalt, at one glance, behold
The daisy and the marigold;
White-plumed lilies, and the first
Hedge-grown primrose that hath burst;
Shaded hyacinth, alway
Sapphire queen of the mid-May;
And every leaf, and every flower
Pearlèd with the self-same shower.
Thou shalt see the field-mouse peep
Meagre from its cellèd sleep;
And the snake all winter-thin
Cast on sunny bank its skin;
Freckled nest eggs thou shalt see
Hatching in the hawthorn-tree,
When the new bird's wing doth rest
Quiet on her mossy nest;
Then the hurry and alarm
When the bee-hive casts its swarm;
Acorns ripe down-pattering
While the autumn breezes sing.

Oh, sweet Fancy! let her loose;
Everything is spoilt by use:
Where's the cheek that doth not fade,
Too much gazed at? Where's the maid
Whose lip mature is ever new?
Where's the eye, however blue,

Doth not weary? Where's the face
One would meet in every place?
Where's the voice, however soft,
One would hear so very oft?
At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth.
Let, then, wingèd Fancy find
Thee a mistress to thy mind:
Dulcet eyed as Ceres'¹ daughter,
Ere the God of Torment taught her
How to frown and how to chide;
With a waist and with a side
White as Hebe's,² when her zone
Slipt its golden clasp, and down
Fell her kirtle to her feet,
While she held the goblet sweet,
And Jove grew languid.—Break the mesh
Of the Fancy's silken leash;
Quickly-break her prison-string,
And such joys as these she'll bring.—
Let the wingèd Fancy roam,
Pleasure never is at home.

J. KEATS.

178.

To the Daisy.

WITH little here to do or see
Of things that in the great world be,
Sweet Daisy! oft I talk to thee,
For thou art worthy,
Thou unassuming commonplace
Of Nature, with that homely face,
And yet with something of a grace
Which love makes for thee!

Oft on the dappled turf at ease
I sit, and play with similes,
Loose types of things through all degrees,
Thoughts of thy raising:

¹ The goddess of corn and of harvests. Her daughter, Proserpine, was carried away by Pluto, god of the Infernal Regions, while gathering flowers in a field.

² A daughter of Jupiter and Juno. She was the goddess of youth.

And many a fond and idle name
I give to thee, for praise or blame,
As is the humour of the game,
While I am gazing.

A nun demure, of lowly port ;
Or sprightly maiden of love's court,
In her simplicity the sport
Of all temptations ;
A queen in crown of rubies drest ;
A starveling in a scanty vest ;
Are all, as seems to suit thee best,
Thy appellations.

A little Cyclops, with one eye
Staring to threaten and defy ;
That thought comes next—and instantly
The freak is over,
The shape will vanish, and behold
A silver shield with boss of gold,
That spreads itself, some fairy bold
In fight to cover !

I see thee glittering from afar ;—
And then thou art a pretty star,
Not quite so fair as others are
In heaven above thee !
Yet like a star, with glittering crest,
Self-poised in air thou seem'st to rest ;—
May peace come never to his nest
Who shall reprove thee !

Sweet flower ! for by that name at last,
When all my reveries are past,
I call thee, and to that cleave fast,
Sweet silent creature !
That breath'st with me in sun and air,
Do thou, as thou art wont, repair
My heart with gladness, and a share
Of thy meek nature !

W. WORDSWORTH.

179.

**Influence of Natural Objects in Calling
Forth and Strengthening the Imagina-
tion in Early Youth.**

WISDOM and Spirit of the universe !
Thou Soul that art the eternity of thought,
That givest to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion, not in vain
By day or star-light thus from my first dawn
Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up our human soul ;
Not with the mean and vulgar works of man,
But with high objects, with enduring things—
With life and nature—purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying, by such discipline,
Both pain and fear, until we recognise
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.
Nor was this fellowship vouchsafed to me
With stinted kindness. In November days,
When vapours rolling down the valley made
A lonely scene more lonesome, among woods,
At noon and 'mid the calm of summer nights,
When, by the margin of the trembling lake,
Beneath the gloomy hills homeward I went
In solitude, such intercourse was mine ;
Mine was it in the fields both day and night,
And by the waters all the summer long.

And in the frosty season, when the sun
Was set, and visible for many a mile
The cottage windows blazed through twilight gloom,
I heeded not their summons : happy time
It was indeed for all of us—for me
It was a time of rapture ! Clear and loud
The village clock tolled six,—I wheeled about,
Proud and exulting like an untired horse
That cares not for his home. All shod with steel,
We hissed along the polished ice in games
Confederate, imitative of the chase

And woodland pleasures,—the resounding horn,
 The pack loud chiming, and the hunted hare.
 So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
 And not a voice was idle ; with the din
 Smitten, the precipices rang aloud ;
 The leafless trees and every icy crag
 Tinkled like iron ; while far distant hills
 Into the tumult sent an alien sound
 Of melancholy not unnoticed, while the stars
 Eastward were sparkling clear, and in the west
 The orange sky of evening died away.
 Not seldom from the uproar I retired
 Into a silent bay, or sportively
 Glanced sideway, leaving the tumultuous throng,
 To cut across the reflex of a star
 That fled, and, flying still before me, gleamed
 Upon the glassy plain ; and oftentimes,
 When we had given our bodies to the wind,
 And all the shadowy banks on either side
 Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still
 The rapid line of motion, then at once
 Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
 Stopped short ; yet still the solitary cliffs
 Wheeled by me—even as if the earth had rolled
 With visible motion her diurnal round !
 Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,
 Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
 Till all was tranquil as a dreamless sleep.

Ye Presences of Nature in the sky
 And on the earth ! Ye Visions of the hills !
 And Souls of lonely places ! can I think
 A vulgar hope was yours when ye employed
 Such ministry, when ye through many a year
 Haunting me thus among my boyish sports,
 On caves and trees, upon the woods and hills,
 Impressed upon all forms the characters
 Of danger or desire ; and thus did make
 The surface of the universal earth
 With triumph and delight, with hope and fear,
 Work like a sea ?

W. WORDSWORTH.

180.

Nature's Child.

THREE years she grew in sun and shower ;
Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown :
This child I to myself will take ;
She shall be mine, and I will make
A lady of my own.

" Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse : and with me
The girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
Shall feel an overseeing power
To kindle or restrain.

" She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn
Or up the mountain springs ;
And her's shall be the breathing balm,
And her's the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things.

" The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her ; for her the willow bend ;
Nor shall she fail to see
E'en in the motions of the storm
Grace that shall mould the maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

" The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her ; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

" And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell ;
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live
Here in this happy dell."

Thus Nature spake.—The work was done—
 How soon my Lucy's race was run !
 She died, and left to me
 This heath, this calm and quiet scene ;
 The memory of what has been,
 And never more will be.

W. WORDSWORTH.

181.

A SLUMBER did my spirit seal ;
 I had no human fears :
 She seemed a thing that could not feel
 The touch of earthly years.
 No motion has she now, no force ;
 She neither hears nor sees ;
 Rolled round in earth's diurnal course
 With rocks, and stones, and trees !

W. WORDSWORTH.

182.

To Blossoms.

FAIR pledges of a fruitful tree,
 Why do ye fall so fast ?
 Your date is not so past,
 But you may stay yet here awhile
 To blush and gently smile,
 And go at last.
 What, were ye born to be
 An hour or half's delight,
 And so to bid good-night ?
 'Twas pity Nature brought ye forth,
 Merely to show your worth,
 And lose you quite.
 But you are lovely leaves, where we
 May read how soon things have
 Their end, though ne'er so brave :
 And after they have shown their pride
 Like you, awhile, they glide
 Into the grave.

R. HERRICK.

183.

To Daffodils.

FAIR Daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon :
As yet the early-rising sun
Has not attained his noon.
Stay, stay,
Until the hasting day
Has run
But to the even-song ;
And, having prayed together, we
Will go with you along.

We have short time to stay, as you,
We have as short a spring ;
As quick a growth to meet decay
As you, or anything.
We die,
As your hours do, and dry
Away
Like to the Summer's rain ;
Or as the pearls of morning's dew
Ne'er to be found again.

R. HERRICK.

184.

Mutability.

THE flower that smiles to-day
To-morrow dies ;
All that we wish to stay
Tempts and then flies.
What is this world's delight ?
Lightning that mocks the night,
Brief even as bright.

Virtue, how frail it is !
Friendship how rare !
Love, how it sells poor bliss
For proud despair !

But we, though soon they fall,
Survive their joy, and all
Which ours we call.

Whilst skies are blue and bright,
Whilst flowers are gay,
Whilst eyes that change ere night
Make glad the day ;
While yet the calm hours creep,
Dream thou—and from thy sleep
Then wake to weep.

P. B. SHELLEY.

185.

Sleep and Poetry.

WHAT is more gentle than a wind in summer ?
What is more soothing than the pretty hummer
That stays one moment in an open flower,
And buzzes cheerily from bower to bower ?
What is more tranquil than a musk-rose blowing
In a green island, far from all men's knowing ?
More healthful than the leafiness of dales ?
More secret than a nest of nightingales ?
More serene than Cordelia's countenance ?
More full of visions than a high romance ?
What, but thee, Sleep ? Soft closer of our eyes !
Low murmurer of tender lullabies !
Light hoverer around our happy pillows !
Wreather of poppy buds, and weeping willows !
Silent entangler of a beauty's tresses !
Most happy listener ! When the morning blesses
Thee for enlivening all the cheerful eyes
That glance so brightly at the new sun-rise.

But what is higher beyond thought than thee ?
Fresher than berries of a mountain tree ?
More strange, more beautiful, more smooth, more regal,
Than wings of swans, than doves, than dim-seen eagle ?
What is it ? And to what shall I compare it ?
It has a glory, and nought else can share it :
The thought thereof is awful, sweet, and holy,
Chasing away all worldliness and folly :

Coming sometimes like fearful claps of thunder ;
Or the low rumblings earth's regions under ;
And sometimes like a gentle whispering
Of all the secrets of some wondrous thing
That breathes about us in the vacant air ;
So that we look around with prying stare,
Perhaps to see shapes of light, ærial limning ;
And catch soft floatings from a faint-heard hymning ;
To see the laurel-wreath, on high suspended,
That is to crown our name when life is ended.
Sometimes it gives a glory to the voice,
And from the heart up-springs, rejoice ! rejoice !
Sounds which will reach the Framer of all things,
And die away in ardent mutterings.

No one who once the glorious sun has seen,
And all the clouds, and felt his bosom clean
For his great Maker's presence, but must know
What 'tis I mean, and feel his being glow :
Therefore no insult will I give his spirit
By telling what he sees from native merit.

O Poesy ! for thee I hold my pen,
That am not yet a glorious denizen
Of thy wide heaven—should I rather kneel
Upon some mountain-top until I feel
A glowing splendour round about me hung,
And echo back the voice of thine own tongue ?
O Poesy ! for thee I grasp my pen,
That am not yet a glorious denizen
Of thy wide heaven ; yet, to my ardent prayer,
Yield from thy sanctuary some clear air,
Smoothed for intoxication by the breath
Of flowering bays, that I may die a death
Of luxury, and my young spirit follow
The morning sunbeams to the great Apollo,
Like a fresh sacrifice ; or, if I can bear
The o'erwhelming sweets, 'twill bring me to the fair
Visions of all places : a bowery nook
Will be elysium—an eternal book
Whence I may copy many a lovely saying
About the leaves and flowers—about the playing

Of nymphs in woods, and fountains ; and the shade
 Keeping a silence round a sleeping maid ;
 And many a verse from so strange influence
 That we must ever wonder how, and whence
 It came. Also imaginings will hover
 Round my fire-side, and haply there discover
 Vistas of solemn beauty, where I'd wander
 In happy silence, like the clear Meander
 Through its lone vales ; and where I found a spot
 Of awfuller shade, or an enchanted grot,
 Or a green hill o'erspread with chequered dress
 Of flowers, and fearful from its loveliness,
 Write on my tablets all that was permitted,
 All that was for our human senses fitted.
 Then the events of this wide world I'd seize
 Like a strong giant, and my spirit tease
 Till at its shoulders it should proudly see
 Wings to find out an immortality.

J. KEATS.

186.

My own best poets, am I one with you,
 That thus I love you,—or but one through love ?
 Does all this smell of thyme about my feet
 Conclude my visit to your holy hill
 In personal presence, or but testify
 The rustling of your vesture through my dreams
 With influent odours ? When my joy and pain,
 My thought and aspiration, like the stops
 Of pipe or flute, are absolutely dumb
 Unless melodious, do you play on me
 My pipers,—and if, sooth, you did not blow,
 Would no sound come ? or is the music mine,
 As a man's voice or breath is called his own,
 Inbreathed by the Life-breather ? There's a doubt
 For cloudy seasons !

But the sun was high
 When first I felt my pulses set themselves
 For concord ; when the rhythmic turbulence
 Of blood and brain swept outward upon words,
 As wind upon the alders, blanching them

By turning up their under-natures till
They trembled in dilation. O delight
And triumph of the poet, who would say
A man's mere "yes," a woman's common "no,"
A little human hope of that or this,
And says the word so that it burns you through
With a special revelation, shakes the heart
Of all the men and women in the world,
As if one came back from the dead and spoke,
With eyes too happy, a familiar thing
Become divine i' the utterance! while for him
The poet, speaker, he expands with joy;
The palpitating angel in his flesh
Thrills inly with consenting fellowship
To those innumerable spirits who sun themselves
Outside of time.

E. B. BROWNING.

187.

A Poet's Death.

WHEN on the threshold of the green recess
The wanderer's footsteps fell, he knew that death
Was on him. Yet a little, ere it fled,
Did he resign his high and holy soul
To images of the majestic past,
That paused within his passive being now,
Like winds that bear sweet music, when they breathe
Through some dim latticed chamber. He did place
His pale lean hand upon the rugged trunk
Of the old pine. Upon an ivied stone
Reclined his languid head; his limbs did rest,
Diffused and motionless, on the smooth brink
Of that obscurest chasm;—and thus he lay,
Surrendering to their final impulses
The hovering powers of life. Hope and despair,
The torturers, slept; no mortal pain or fear
Marred his repose; the influxes of sense,
And his own being unalloyed by pain,
Yet feebler and more feeble, calmly fed
The stream of thought, till he lay breathing there

At peace, and faintly smiling :—his last sight
 Was the great moon, which o'er the western line
 Of the wide world her mighty horn suspended,
 With whose dun beams inwoven darkness seemed
 To mingle. Now upon the jagged hills
 It rests, and still as the divided frame
 Of the vast meteor sunk, the poet's blood
 That ever beat in mystic sympathy
 With nature's ebb and flow, grew feebler still :
 And when two lessening points of light alone
 Gleamed through the darkness, the alternate gasp
 Of his faint respiration scarce did stir
 The stagnate night :—till the minutest ray
 Was quenched, the pulse yet lingered in his heart.
 It paused—it fluttered. But when heaven remained
 Utterly black, the murky shades involved
 An image, silent, cold, and motionless,
 As their own voiceless earth and vacant air.
 Even as a vapour fed with golden beams
 That ministered on sunlight, ere the west
 Eclipses it, was now that wondrous frame—
 No sense, no motion, no divinity—
 A fragile lute, on whose harmonious strings
 The breath of heaven did wander—a bright stream
 Once fed with many-voiced waves—a dream
 Of youth, which night and time have quenched for ever,
 Still, dark, and dry, and unremembered now.

P. B. SHELLEY.

188.

The Indian Serenade.

I ARISE from dreams of thee
 In the first sweet sleep of night,
 When the winds are breathing low,
 And the stars are shining bright :
 I arise from dreams of thee,
 And a spirit in my feet
 Hath led me—who knows how ?
 To thy chamber window, Sweet

The wandering airs they faint
On the dark, the silent stream—
And the champak's odours fail
Like sweet thoughts in a dream;
The nightingale's complaint,
It dies upon her heart;—
As I must on thine,
O! belovèd as thou art!
O lift me from the grass!
I die! I faint! I fail!
Let thy love in kisses rain
On my lips and eyelids pale.
My cheek is cold and white, alas!
My heart beats loud and fast;—
O! press it to thine own again,
Where it will break at last.

P. B. SHELLEY.

189.

To a Skylark.

HAIL to thee, blithe spirit!
Bird thou never wert
That from heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.
Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.
In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
Thou dost float and run,
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.
The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of heaven,
In the broad day-light
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight,

Keen as are the arrows
 Of that silver sphere,
 Whose intense lamp narrows
 In the white dawn clear,
 Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there.
 All the earth and air
 With thy voice is loud,
 As, when night is bare,
 From one lonely cloud
 The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is overflowed.
 What thou art we know not ;
 What is most like thee?
 From rainbow clouds there flow not
 Drops so bright to see,
 As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.
 Like a poet hidden
 In the light of thought,
 Singing hymns unbidden,
 Till the world is wrought
 To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not :
 Like a high-born maiden
 In a palace tower,
 Soothing her love-laden
 Soul in secret hour
 With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower :
 Like a glow-worm golden
 In a dell of dew,
 Scattering unbeholden
 Its ærial hue
 Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the view :
 Like a rose embowered
 In its own green leaves,
 By warm winds deflowered,
 Till the scent it gives
 Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-winged thieves:
 Sound of vernal showers
 On the twinkling grass,
 Rain-awakened flowers,
 All that ever was
 Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass.

Teach us, sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine ;
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.
Chorus Hymenæal
Or triumphal chaunt,
Matched with thine would be all
But an empty vaunt,
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.
What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain ?
What fields, or waves, or mountains ?
What shapes of sky or plain ?
What love of thine own kind ? what ignorance of pain ?
With thy clear keen joyance
Languor cannot be :
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee :
Thou lovest ; but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.
Waking or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream ?
We look before and after,
And pine for what is not :
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught ;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.
Yet if we could scorn
Hate, and pride, and fear ;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.
Better than all measures
Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground !

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Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow,
The world should listen then, as I am listening now.

P. B. SHELLEY.

190.

Meeting at Night.

THE grey sea and the long black land ;
And the yellow half-moon large and low ;
And the startled little waves that leap
In fiery ringlets from their sleep,
As I gain the cove with pushing prow,
And quench its speed i' the slushy sand.

Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach ;
Three fields to cross till a farm appears ;
A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch
And blue spurt of a lighted match,
And a voice less loud, thro' its joys and fears,
Than the two hearts beating each to each !

R. BROWNING.

191.

A Widow Bird.

A WIDOW bird sate mourning for her love
Upon a wintry bough :
The frozen wind crept on above,
The freezing stream below.

There was no leaf upon the forest bare,
No flower upon the ground,
And little motion in the air
Except the mill-wheel's sound.

P. B. SHELLEY.

192.

Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood.

THERE was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,

To me did seem

Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore ;—

Turn wheresoe'er I may,

By night or day,

The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

The rainbow comes and goes,

And lovely is the rose,

The moon doth with delight

Look round her when the heavens are bare ;

Waters on a starry night

Are beautiful and fair ;

The sunshine is a glorious birth ;

But yet I know, where'er I go,

That there hath passed away a glory from the earth.

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,

And while the young lambs bound

As to the tabor's sound,

To me alone there came a thought of grief :

A timely utterance gave that thought relief,

And I again am strong :

The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep,

No more shall grief of mine the season wrong ;

I hear the echoes through the mountains throng,

The winds come to me from the fields of sleep,

And all the earth is gay ;

Land and sea

Give themselves up to jollity,

And with the heart of May

Doth every beast keep holiday ;—

Thou child of joy,

Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy shepherd boy !

Ye blessèd creatures, I have heard the call
 Ye to each other make ; I see
 The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee ;
 My heart is at your festival,
 My head hath its coronal,
 The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.
 Oh, evil day ! if I were sullen
 While the earth herself is adorning,
 This sweet May morning,
 And the children are pulling,
 On every side,
 In a thousand valleys far and wide,
 Fresh flowers ; while the sun shines warm,
 And the babe leaps up on his mother's arm :—
 I hear, I hear, with joy I hear !
 —But there's a tree, of many one,
 A single field which I have looked upon,
 Both of them speak of something that is gone :
 The pansy at my feet
 Doth the same tale repeat :
 Whither is fled the visionary gleam ?
 Where is it now, the glory and the dream ?

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting :
 The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
 Hath had elsewhere its setting,
 And cometh from afar :
 Not in entire forgetfulness,
 And not in utter nakedness,
 But trailing clouds of glory do we come
 From God who is our home :
 Heaven lies about us in our infancy !
 Shades of the prison-house begin to close
 Upon the growing boy,
 But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
 He sees it in his joy ;
 The youth, who daily farther from the East
 Must travel, still is Nature's priest,
 And by the vision splendid
 Is on his way attended ;
 At length the man perceives it die away,
 And fade into the light of common day.

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own ;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
And, even with something of a mother's mind,

 And no unworthy aim,
 The homely nurse doth all she can
To make her foster-child, her inmate, Man,
 Forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came.

Behold the child among his new-born blisses,
A six years' darling of a pigmy size !
See, where mid work of his own hand he lies,
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
With light upon him from his father's eyes !
See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
Some fragment from his dream of human life,
Shaped by himself with newly-learnèd art ;

 A wedding or a festival,
 A mourning or a funeral ;
 And this hath now his heart,
And unto this he frames his song :
 Then will he fit his tongue
To dialogues of business, love, or strife ;
 But it will not be long
 Ere this be thrown aside,
 And with new joy and pride
The little actor cons another part ;
Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"
With all the persons, down to palsied Age,
That Life brings with her in her equipage ;
 As if his whole vocation
 Were endless imitation.

Thou, whose exterior semblance dost belie
 Thy soul's immensity ;
Thou best philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind,—
 Mighty Prophet ! seer blest !
 On whom those truths do rest,
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave ;
Thou, over whom thy immortality

Broods like the day, a master o'er a slave,
 A presence which is not to be put by ;
 Thou little child, yet glorious in the might
 Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
 Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
 The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
 Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife ?
 Full soon thy soul shall have her earthly freight,
 And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
 Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life !

O joy ! that in our embers
 Is something that doth live,
 That nature yet remembers
 What was so fugitive !

The thought of our past years in me doth breed
 Perpetual benediction : not indeed
 For that which is most worthy to be blest ;
 Delight and liberty, the simple creed
 Of childhood, whether busy or at rest,
 With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast :—

Not for these I raise
 The song of thanks and praise ;
 But for those obstinate questionings
 Of sense and outward things,
 Fallings from us, vanishings ;
 Blank misgivings of a creature
 Moving about in worlds not realized,
 High instincts before which our mortal nature
 Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised :
 But for those first affections
 Those shadowy recollections,
 Which, be they what they may,
 Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
 Are yet a master light of all our seeing ;
 Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
 Our noisy years seem moments in the being
 Of the eternal silence : truths that wake,
 To perish never ;
 Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,
 Nor man nor boy,
 Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
 Can utterly abolish or destroy !
 Hence, in a season of calm weather,

Though inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.
Then sing, ye birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
And let the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound!
We in thought will join your throng,
Ye that pipe and ye that play,
Ye that through your hearts to-day
Feel the gladness of the May!
What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now for ever taken from my sight,
Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind,
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be,
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering,
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.
And O ye fountains, meadows, hills, and groves,
Think not of any severing of our loves!
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
I only have relinquished one delight
To live beneath your more habitual sway.
I love the brooks which down their channels fret,
Even more than when I tripped lightly as they;
The innocent brightness of a new-born day
Is lovely yet;
The clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober colouring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;
Another race hath been, and other palms are won,
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

W. WORDSWORTH.

193.

A Lament.

OH, world! oh, life! oh, time!
 On whose last steps I climb
 Trembling at that where I had stood before;
 When will return the glory of your prime?
 No more—O, never more!

Out of the day and night
 A joy has taken flight;
 Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar,
 Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight
 No more—O, never more!

P. B. SHELLEY.

194.

Lucy.

SHE dwelt among the untrodden ways
 Beside the springs of Dove,
 A maid whom there were none to praise,
 And very few to love.

A violet by a mossy stone
 Half-hidden from the eye!
 —Fair as a star, when only one
 Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
 When Lucy ceased to be;
 But she is in her grave, and O!
 The difference to me!

W. WORDSWORTH.

195.

I TRAVELLED among unknown men,
 In lands beyond the sea;
 Nor, England! did I know till then
 What love I bore to thee.

'Tis past, that melancholy dream!
Nor will I quit thy shore
A second time; for still I seem
To love thee more and more.

Among thy mountains did I feel
The joy of my desire;
And she I cherished turned her wheel
Beside an English fire.

Thy mornings showed, thy nights concealed
The bowers where Lucy played;
And thine is too the last green field
That Lucy's eyes surveyed.

W. WORDSWORTH.

196.

To ———.

ONE word is too often profaned
For me to profane it,
One feeling too falsely disdained
For thee to disdain it.
One hope is too like despair
For prudence to smother,
And pity from thee more dear
Than that from another.

I can give not what men call love,
But wilt thou accept not
The worship the heart lifts above
And the Heavens reject not,
The desire of the moth for the star,
Of the night for the morrow,
The devotion to something afar
From the sphere of our sorrow?

P. B. SHELLEY.

197.

Ozymandias of Egypt.

I MET a traveller from an antique land
 Who said : Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
 Stand in the desert. Near them on the sand
 Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown
 And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command
 Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
 Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
 The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed ;
 And on the pedestal these words appear :
 ' My name is Ozymandias, king of kings :
 Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair !'
 Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
 Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
 The lone and level sands stretch far away.

P. B. SHELLEY.

198.

Upon Westminster Bridge.

EARTH has not anything to show more fair :
 Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
 A sight so touching in its majesty :
 This City now doth like a garment wear

The beauty of the morning : silent, bare,
 Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
 Open unto the fields, and to the sky,
 All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.

Never did sun more beautifully steep
 In his first splendour valley, rock, or hill ;
 Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep !

The river glideth at his own sweet will :
 Dear God ! the very houses seem asleep ;
 And all that mighty heart is lying still !

W. WORDSWORTH.

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